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THE AMERICAN SANTAL MISSION

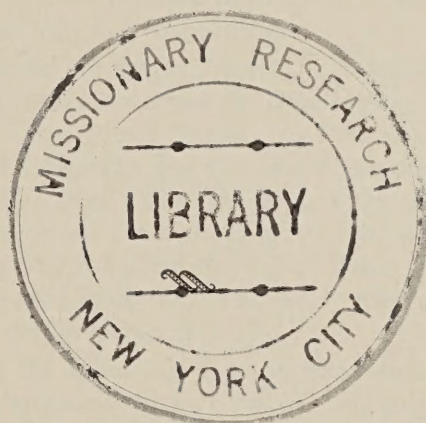
By Andreas Helland

THE AMERICAN SANTAL MISSION

Notes on Its History

By

Andreas Helland



THE AMERICAN SANTAL MISSION
401 Cedar Avenue
Minneapolis 4, Minnesota
1948

Preface

The following pages have been prepared in response to a request by the American Santal Committee for a brief sketch of the history of this mission. The material has been overwhelmingly rich for the purpose. The difficulty has been to condense it and at the same time to make it readable.


Any attempt to write mission history, be it ever so insignificant, is faced with a double task. The one is to picture missions as an endeavor by the Christian Church to evangelize the nations. The other is to evaluate the fruits of this endeavor. These pages are for obvious reasons confined to the former aim only. Nor is this a finished sketch, but rather some scattered notes about everyday happenings.

My sincere thanks are due to Pastor J. C. Aaberg for supplying important information about the Danish-American activity in the interest of the Santal Mission, to Pastors O. S. Bjerkestrand and Odd Gornitzka for valuable suggestions of a general nature, and to Miss Grace Johnson of the Santal Mission office for helping to put the manuscript in final shape. I regret that I could not also have had the aid of Pastor M. C. Dixen, but this was impossible since he has been on a visit to Santalistan while it was under preparation.

If by reading the following pages someone may be brought to a clearer realization of the fact that *it costs* to carry on foreign mission work — costs in lives, health, patience, prayers, and material as well as spiritual sacrifices — but that it also is abundantly worth the cost, then the intended result has been gained, to the glory of God.

ANDREAS HELLAND.

Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 15, 1948



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The Situation

The American Santal Mission was officially started on Friday, the 13th of November, 1891, by men who were evidently not troubled by superstitious fears that "Friday the thirteenth" was not an auspicious day on which to launch out on an important undertaking. Their faith in God and in the cause of foreign missions has also been richly rewarded.

Interest in foreign missions was part of the precious spiritual inheritance which many Christian Norwegian and Danish emigrants brought with them to the new world.

In 1854 the Reverend P. A. Rasmussen became pastor of the Lisbon congregation, Lisbon, Illinois. It consisted largely of people who had come from Stavanger and vicinity. Pastor Rasmussen was himself born in this city which had already become a center of missionary activity in Norway. He had become deeply interested in the cause of missions, but his endeavors were mainly centered about sending financial aid to the Norwegian Mission Society in Stavanger. During the earlier years of his ministry, he does not seem to have visualized a Norwegian-American foreign mission activity with the sending out and support of missionaries. This thought came to him as to others at a later time.

The other early champion of foreign missions among the Norwegian Lutherans in America was Professor Georg Sverdrup, president of Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis, from 1876 until his death in 1907. It was from about 1878 that he was led to speak the cause of missions, not only in the way that Pastor Rasmussen had done for many years, but also to plead for young men to go out into foreign mission service.

From 1883 the question of taking up foreign mission activity became a real issue in the Norwegian Danish Conference. Although some years were to pass before further steps were taken,

the friendly conferences about the matter were, nevertheless, of considerable value.

Monday, June 13, 1887, was one of those "days of small beginnings" which often become so significant in their results. On that day Mr. John P. Hogstad, a graduate of Augsburg Seminary, was ordained on call of the mission committee of the Conference to become a missionary in Madagascar in the service of the Norwegian Mission Society. While he was officially in the service of this Society, he was to be supported by the Conference. Two years later another graduate from Augsburg Seminary, Pastor Erik H. Tou, went to Madagascar under a similar arrangement.

At the time of the church union in 1890 this mission activity became part of the inheritance of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and in 1892 an arrangement was entered into with the Norwegian Mission Society by which the southernmost part of Madagascar, where Hogstad and Tou had been stationed, became the recognized mission field of the Norwegian Lutherans in America.

About 1888 or 1889 interest for foreign mission work in China was kindled in America by a Norwegian missionary, O. S. Nestegaard, Sr. Partly at least as a result of his impassioned appeal, an independent China Mission Society was started in 1890, and in 1891 the Hauge's Synod began its own work in China. Those of the pioneers whose names have become best known were Daniel Nelson and H. N. Rønning. These two missions have long ago been consolidated into the large, flourishing Lutheran United Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Danish immigration to America began considerably later than that of the Norwegians, and was much smaller. The earliest church work among the Danes in this country was done by Norwegian pastors who organized not a few partly or wholly Danish congregations before any Danish pastors arrived on the scene. As the number of Danish immigrants increased, the need for men of their own nationality to serve them became more

and more apparent. The first one who effectively presented the need for Danish church work in America was Rev. C. L. Clausen. His urgent plea bore fruit in the sending of Rev. Grove Rasmussen to America to investigate the need and possibilities of such a work. He was accompanied by two men, R. Andersen, a student at the foreign mission school in Copenhagen, and A. S. Nielsen, who for some time had worked as lay-preacher. Nielsen received a call from the Danish congregation at Cedar Falls, Iowa, and was ordained by Rev. C. L. Clausen November 17, 1871. Andersen became a student in Augsburg Seminary, then located at Marshall, Wisconsin, and was later ordained. Among other early pastors should be mentioned Adam Dan, a former missionary in Palestine. It is significant that four of these men had worked as missionaries or had prepared for missionary activity. Some of the Danish immigrants whose interest in foreign missions had been awakened in the homeland sent individual contributions to various mission societies in Denmark, but no organized effort was made to support any mission enterprise.

A considerable number of these immigrants arriving in the eighties and nineties had heard Børresen and Skrefsrud and had become interested in their work. Børresen especially had made a deep impression on many on account of his strong, childlike faith in God.

In Norway there had never been a question of official recognition of the foreign missionary activity in the strictest sense of the word. It was a voluntary undertaking, supported entirely by free-will donations. Still, the Norwegian Mission Society had gained for itself an unique place in the popular mind and its standing was further strengthened by the fact that the bishops of Norway were permitted to ordain the young men trained at its mission institute in Stavanger, although they could not in consequence of this ordination become regular pastors in the State Church of Norway. About the same situation prevailed in Denmark.

Shortly before 1870 it became known that two men, a Dane and a Norwegian, had started some sort of independent mis-

sionary activity in India. They had gone out in the service of the German Goszner Mission Society, but for one reason or another they had left this mission and had on their own initiative started to hunt for a field and had settled down in the district of Santal Parganas, 150 miles northwest of Calcutta.

Who were these two men? It was known that their names were Hans Peter Børresen and Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, and that they were practically laymen without much scholastic training. The older man, the Dane Børresen, was a civil engineer. Otherwise little was known about him, at least in Norway. As for the younger man, the Norwegian Skrefsrud, about all that was known for certain was that he had served a term in prison on account of theft, but that while there he had become converted to God.

The Santal Mission consisted of these men and their wives. They had no mission society behind them, but it was rumored that they had associated themselves more or less closely with some Englishmen and Scotchmen, one of them at least supposed to be a Baptist. It was also rumored that they received some support from England and Scotland. But over against the well-established Norwegian and Danish Mission Societies this independent missionary undertaking could not expect much popular confidence, and still less official or semi-official recognition.

To be sure, it was not many years before Christian people both in Denmark and Norway began to take notice of Børresen and Skrefsrud and their work. Men whose word was known to be dependable brought reports to the effect that their activity seemed to be signally blessed by God, and when they came home on visits, it could be said about both of them as it was said about Stephen of old, only in a different sense: People could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which they spoke.

The Preparation

It was a Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1881. Missionary Skrefsrud was on a visit to Norway and had received the highest recognition that he could ever wish to receive, for he had been ordained into the Christian ministry by a Norwegian bishop. He was to preach in the largest hall in the Oslo of that day, the gymnasium at Fort Akershus. It was supposed to seat some over 2,000 persons and had standing room for as many more. On this occasion it was more than filled; but the clear, resonant voice of the missionary could be heard not only by those inside, but also by the many that stood outside the open windows.

The gist of the mighty message was what is contained in the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:20: "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." This rule was absolutely universal, thundered the eloquent speaker. It had proved true in India among the down-trodden, sin-burdened and superstitious Santals, just as it had proved true in Norway. Then he added: "It has proved true in my life; it will prove true in yours. If you will come to God today with your abounding sin, you can go out from here with His more exceedingly abounding grace as your possession."

That day marked the real beginning of the Santal mission activity in America, although the official beginning was not to come before ten years later.

Somewhere in that vast audience sat a little man, not much over five feet tall, with downcast eyes and a face marked by grief. There had been a time when it was always smiling, always upward-looking, but not today. He had been one among a group of Christian men who had banded together to hold religious house-meetings, to visit the sick and the shut-ins, and also otherwise to serve Christ in the persons of His least ones. He ran a little neighborhood store; but led, or perhaps we should rather say misled by a naturally sympathetic nature, he had endorsed notes for his friends, far beyond his economic ability,

and when a financial depression threatened to bring on a crash, he yielded in his despair to the temptation to falsify some financial papers in the vain hope that he should become able to rectify this misstep before it was discovered. But the law caught up with him, and for some months he had the sad experience of looking at prison bars from the inside.

Utterly miserable, feeling himself forsaken by God and man, he sat there that Sunday afternoon and stared at a man who had once been in prison, but who now by God's exceedingly abounding grace had found peace for his soul and who had already behind him years of a richly blest missionary service, a man who had regained the confidence of the Christian people and the church to such an extent that he had been ordained to the Christian ministry. He not only saw this man, but he heard him say: You too can go out from here, assured of God's exceedingly abounding grace as your possession.

This man, H. Bottolsen was his name, saw, heard, and believed. The burden was taken off his shoulders. Nothing mattered any more, for he had heard the voice of Jesus say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace!

It should be recorded to the honor of that little group of which Bottolsen had been a beloved and respected brother, that they did not disown him, but showed him genuine Christian kindness and tried to help him in every way. Yet it should not be counted against him that he had a yearning to get away from the scene of his humiliation, and so we find him and his wife one day in the early eighties in Minneapolis. Here they became members of Trinity Lutheran Congregation. In time he became its sexton, and he also worked as part-time city missionary.

When a group of Christian young men started a Norwegian Young Men's Christian Association and had a building erected for it at 19th Avenue South and Riverside, near Cedar Avenue, Bottolsen became its "house father." The soul in this undertaking was Mr. John Field, known for his great philanthropy, directed especially to children and old people, with Ebenezer Old Folks Home as its crowning monument.

The Norwegian Young Men's Christian Association did a blessed work for the many Norwegian young boys living in this district, often in squalid boarding houses and above saloons, and the little man with the smiling face and the friendly handshake was a great spiritual help to these newcomers. Those who knew him would not soon forget him.

It has already been stated that the American Santal Mission was officially started on the 13th of November, 1891. But the real beginning took place that Sunday afternoon in Oslo, Norway, ten years earlier. Then the seed was planted which should in time by the grace of God bear rich fruit. Like all living organisms it had to go through a development that was hidden from the eyes of men.

The Santal mission was little known in America in those days, and seldom written about, but Bottolsen could never forget that this mission had been, indirectly, God's outstretched hand to save him in his extreme distress. This consciousness grew deeper with the years until he could not keep still any longer. He sensed that God was calling him, and he could not resist.

3

The Beginning

From the minutes of the American Santal Committee and from other sources it is, fortunately, possible to reconstruct the story of the beginning of the work for the Santal Mission in America.

It was probably in the summer of 1891 that Mr. Bottolsen spoke to three men about the burden upon his heart. One was his own pastor, the Reverend M. F. Gjertsen who from his early youth had come in contact with the cause of missions since his father, Pastor Johan P. Gjertsen, was the founder of the Zion Society for Israel. The second man to whom he spoke was Professor S. Oftedal of Augsburg Seminary, a warm friend of foreign missions as is evidenced from what he already then had

written about this important subject. The third one was Professor J. H. Blegen, teacher in Augsburg College, who in 1887 had become secretary of the Zion Society. That these men would give him wholehearted encouragement one would expect both on account of their mission interest and their deep human sympathy.

It is also probable that Bottolsen very soon contacted another Minneapolis pastor, the Reverend I. Eistensen. These men must have laid some tentative plans for the beginning of actual work. They evidently did not only agree upon forming a committee, but also upon the number of its members as well as its actual personnel. We conclude this from the following item of information in the record of the first meeting of the Santal Committee where we read:

"On Friday, the 13th of November, 1891, the committee for the Santal Mission held its first meeting in the home of Pastor M. F. Gjertsen. Present were those (members) of the committee that live in Minneapolis, namely: Pastors Gjertsen and I. Eistensen, Professors S. Oftedal and J. H. Blegen, and H. Bottolsen." We learn further that no one was present of the four members living outside of Minneapolis, namely: Pastor J. C. Roseland, Clinton, Wis.; Pastor N. G. Petersen, Jewell, Iowa; Pastor O. P. Svingen, Randall, Iowa; and Mr. O. Kristiansen, Sioux Rapids, Iowa.

That these four men must have been contacted beforehand by letter is evident from the fact that in electing officers of the committee provision had been made so that they could also cast their vote. For we learn that "ballots from the members living outside the city had been sent in and were placed in the container together with the ballots of those present."

The election resulted as follows: Pastor N. G. Petersen, president; Pastor M. F. Gjertsen, vice-president; Pastor J. C. Roseland, secretary; and H. Bottolsen, vice-secretary and treasurer.

Thereby the American Santal Committee was organized and ready for work. The preliminary correspondence had very likely been conducted by Bottolsen himself.

It is of interest to note the church affiliation of the nine men that constituted the original Santal Mission Committee. They have all long ago gone to their reward. Mr. Kristiansen the present writer has never known, but he has reason to believe that he belonged to the United Church. Three of the members, Eistensen, Petersen, and Svingen, were pastors in the Hauge's Synod, and the other five, Blegen, Bottolsen, Gjertsen, Oftedal, and Rose-land, were members of the United Church.

There was only the very minimum of organization and no constitution or by-laws. There was, however, an executive committee consisting of "the members living in Minneapolis" who were five in number.

One reason for this minimum of organization was no doubt the somewhat unique organization of the Santal Mission itself. At the time that we are concerned with, the Santal Mission enjoyed complete autonomy in the sense that the leadership was entirely in the hands of the founders, Børresen and Skrefsrud. The government was patriarchal. There was no mission board in the usual sense of the word. This is also implied in the very name which was then commonly used to designate the mission officially. It was *The Indian Home Mission to the Santals*. Not only did the two founders decide about the use of the contributions sent to them; they also called the new missionaries. The home committees — for such there were both in Denmark and Norway — presented the names of can-



Rev. N. G. Petersen, President, 1891-1902
Editor, 1895-97

didates, accompanied by proper information and recommendations, but the missionaries extended the formal call. Thus the committees in the homelands were simply auxiliaries, a fact that would, of course, not prevent that they on occasion would act in an advisory manner.

It was no doubt this circumstance that caused the American Committee not to feel the need of any but the simplest rules. More elaborate ones were adopted many years afterwards as a result of a natural development.

One feature about the way in which the original Santal Committee was constituted may seem rather strange to us. It had no Danish member except it be Mr. Kristiansen from Sioux Rapids, Iowa, and this is not probable. Børresen was the acknowledged leader of the mission, and he was a Dane. It is not known that Skrefsrud ever questioned his leadership. To him as to the Santals Børresen always remained "Papa." Why, then, were no Danish members included in the American Santal Committee? The answer is at least partly given by the circumstances. It was the layman Bottolsen who from the beginning was the moving spirit in the American Santal Mission. To him Missionary Skrefsrud was almost more than a father; he was the instrument that God had used to save him from utter despair and to lead him back to peace with the Lord. To him the Santal Mission was essentially "Skrefsrud's mission," an expression which he even used in the official minutes of the Santal Committee. It would therefore not be surprising if he did not include any Danish members in planning for a committee. But what about the others with whom he no doubt conferred? One must remember that the idea of spiritual cooperation was not as strong then as it is now. To us it may look like an unfortunate oversight, to say the least; but that it was not caused by any illwill may be regarded as absolutely certain.

The Santal Mission had, nevertheless, its friends also among the Danish immigrants to this country. But as the early mission friends among the Norwegians sent their gifts to Norway, so also did the Danish mission friends send theirs to Denmark;

and when Missionary Skrefsrud was on his visit in America in 1894-1895, he spoke in a number of Danish congregations, arousing new interest and strengthening that which already had been awakened. This increased the gifts sent to the Santal Committee in Denmark, but produced no effort to spread the work here in America. But also this was to come in time.

4

The Santal Committee Goes to Work

The American Santal Committee decided at its very first meeting to invite Missionary Skrefsrud to visit America as soon as possible, or rather it confirmed an invitation already sent him privately by Mr. Bottolsen. It also decided that the organization of the Committee should be given appropriate publicity.

To the invitation to come to America Skrefsrud answered that this would not be possible for some time. But he sent an article, strongly commending the step that had been taken in the interest of the Santal Mission. This article was sent to the Norwegian-American newspapers for publication and was also printed in pamphlet form and widely distributed.

The papers showed on the whole a praiseworthy willingness to print such information as was given by the committee. While some church authorities did not view independent religious undertakings with complete approval, the Santal Committee felt convinced that its endeavors were fully legitimate.

The committee soon came face to face with a problem of considerable importance. Both Denmark and Norway had their own Santal Mission papers whose contents consisted mostly of correspondences from the missionaries, principally Børresen and Skrefsrud. It appears to have been their idea that the American Committee was to gather subscribers for the Norwegian paper *Santalen* and to have some of its articles reprinted in the Norwegian-American press. The executive committee decided against this arrangement and informed Skrefsrud that it

would serve the cause of the Santal Mission in America best if correspondences were sent here directly. This would also be more acceptable to the papers. That the American Committee even at this early stage had dreams about starting their own paper is quite likely. And it should be said to the credit of the missionaries that they very willingly agreed to the wishes of the committee.

The first donation to the Santal Mission was received January 3, 1892. It consisted of an anonymous gift of \$5.00. It came from Marinette, Wisconsin, and was sent in by a young pastor, N. J. Vikingstad, who soon proved himself a very active friend of the cause. To the meeting on February 17, 1892, the treasurer reported that \$105.25 had been received, and it was voted to send \$100.00 to Missionary Skrefsrud at once. This was the financial first-fruit from the American Committee to the Santal Mission.

By the first of November that year, \$1,570.12 had been received and \$1,250.00 had already been sent out to the mission field.

In the early summer of 1892, Santalistan and other parts of India were visited by one of the periodic famines from which that country has so often suffered. An appeal for aid was issued by the committee which received prompt and gratifying response. The first gift of \$3.00 was received on August 17; in two weeks \$672.27 had come in. By November 1 the total had reached \$2,396.66. Thus nearly \$4,000.00 had been received in the course of eleven months, of which 39.6% was for the mission work and 60.4% for famine relief.

At the first meeting of the Santal Committee, Mr. Bottolsen was called as travelling representative of the mission, but was unable to accept the call. In the spring of 1893 he stated that it was his intention soon to return to Norway. His resignation was accepted with sincere regrets. He had worked hard and faithfully — and entirely gratis. At a meeting in May, 1893, the executive committee voted him a gratuity of \$100.00. Professor Blegen was elected temporary secretary and treasurer.

Mr. Bottolsen's chief reason for returning to Norway in 1893 was no doubt the state of his wife's health which had been aggravated by the fact that she had never been able to feel at home in America. Some years after his return to Norway Mr. Bottolsen suffered an apoplectic stroke which made him a helpless invalid for the rest of his life. The present writer had opportunity to visit him several times during his stay at the University of Oslo in 1904-1905. Bottolsen often spoke with gratitude about his years in Minneapolis, but nothing made his heart so glad as when he heard that Pastor M. A. Pederson stood ready to go as a missionary to Santalistan. He passed away in the summer of 1905.



Prof. J. H. Blegen, Secretary-treasurer, 1893 - 1928. Editor, 1897 - 1928. First American trustee of the Santal Mission

During the year 1893 the income had amounted to \$1,-436.07, this being somewhat less than the previous year. The solicitation for famine relief had been finished. At the annual meeting in December Professor Blegen was elected secretary and treasurer.

The great event of 1894 was the arrival of Missionary Skrefsrud in May of that year. A large number of invitations were already on hand, and he was kept very busy during his whole visit, with practically no vacation until he returned to India in the fall of 1895 at the cabled request of Missionary Børresen. There was then on hand not less than about 250 invitations that could not be filled.

The financial results had been very good. The offerings had amounted to \$14,176.99. That this had a great deal of influence on the general contributions was but natural. The total receipts for 1894 and 1895 were \$15,581.91.

A considerable financial "byproduct" was the sale of photographs from Santalistan, both of the missionaries, the church at Ebenezer station, Mrs. Børresen's girls' school, etc. The net receipts from this source exceeded \$2,100.00.

But of far greater importance than the financial result was the spiritual impact made by Missionary Skrefsrud on pastors and congregations wherever he went. That there were those who made an idol of him cannot be denied, but he himself did all in his power to avoid it. Missionary Skrefsrud had come to America with the aim of arousing interest for the Santal mission by relating how the gospel of Christ also in India had proved to be a power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. But he found here much spiritual death, and little of true Christian love, and thus his message soon became a mighty appeal for a spiritual revival right here at home. And when he began to tell in simple words about how beautifully the spiritual life uttered itself among the lowly Santals, many a lukewarm Christian became filled with sorrow and shame, and began to seek back to that first love which he had forsaken and lost.

If and when the story of "the awakening in the nineties" of last century is written, Missionary Skrefsrud merits a prominent place in that picture.

At the third annual meeting of the American Santal Committee in November, 1894, it was decided to start the publication of a monthly paper to speak the cause of the mission. Pastor N. G. Petersen was elected editor and Professor J. H. Blegen business manager. The size was 16 pages octavo and the subscription price 35 cents a year, or \$1.00 for three years. It was sent free to pastors and ladies' aids who desired to receive it, and also to individuals who volunteered to support a native worker on the mission field. Missionary Skrefsrud was asked to edit the first issue; it was published in April, 1895. The name of the paper was "*Santalmissionæren*" (The Santal Missionary). At the annual meeting in November, 1895, it was reported that \$746.51 had been received in subscriptions while the cost of printing, etc. had been \$689.88.

To the annual meeting of the Santal Committee in November, 1896, the treasurer reported that the receipts for the year had amounted to \$1,630.34. The sum seems small, but our country was suffering under a financial depression.

The first five-year period in the history of the American Santal mission was at an end. The total income had been \$22,615.10, or an annual average of \$4,522.32. But it must be remembered that of this total Missionary Skrefsrud had himself collected almost 63% during his visit in 1894 and 1895.

Great things had happened during these five years as far as the American Santal Mission was concerned. It had had a promising beginning and a fairly satisfactory growth, everything considered. Missionary Skrefsrud had visited America, and many were those who owed their spiritual life to this visit. *Santalmissionæren* had been started, and this little paper was destined to become the "Field Representative" of the mission.

During the second five-year period of the Santal mission (1897 to 1901) the average annual income amounted to \$4,454.07. While this was a little less than the average for the first five years, one must bear in mind that there had been no missionary to arouse interest, so that in a sense there had been a real progress anyway.

5

"Who Will Go for Us?"

Ten years had passed, and yet no missionary had gone out from America to preach the Good Tidings to the Santals. Missionary Skrefsrud had pleaded for someone to go, but without visible results. From the minutes of the Santal Committee we learn that "the secretary was instructed to answer a letter from Mr. Carl A. Newman who wishes to go as a missionary to Santalistan." There is no further information about this application.

The next time that a missionary for Santalistan is mentioned officially is in 1901. At the annual meeting that year "it was

decided to request the executive committee to look around for a man who might be qualified and willing to go as missionary to Santalistan, and to confer with him and also with Missionary Skrefsrud about this matter, and to report to the committee."

Such a report was given at the annual meeting in December, 1902. Pastors M. O. Wee of Hauge's Synod and M. A. Pederson



Rev. M. A. Pederson and wife, First American Santal missionaries, 1904-1935.
Pederson served as Secretary-treasurer and Editor, 1929-31

of the Lutheran Free Church had been contacted, and both had seemed to be interested. A letter had also been sent to Skrefsrud, but no reply had been received as yet. But to the annual meeting in November, 1903, the secretary was able to report that Skrefsrud had sent a letter of call to Pastor M. A. Pederson who was himself present at the meeting. After conferring with him it was resolved that "the committee will advise Pastor Pederson and wife to accept the call from Skrefsrud and go to Santalistan

as soon as possible. The committee will pay the necessary traveling expenses."

When on August 30, 1904, Pastor Pederson and his wife stood ready to go aboard a steamer in New York to sail for India, he sent a greeting to the friends of the Santal Mission of which the following is a part: "The Lord has bestowed upon us, poor and unworthy sinners as we are, the great grace to call us to be workers in His vineyard in Santalistan. He also gave us grace, after many a hard struggle, to say: 'Here are we; send us.' And after the decision had been taken, we have found a blessed peace in our hearts. We begin our journey in faith and hope."

Almost thirteen years had passed from the time that the American Santal Committee was organized, before the first missionaries went to the field. Now many prayers had been heard and many hearts experienced a great joy. But it was only the first-fruit, and many more years were to pass before there came another answer to the question: Who will go for us?

6

Looking Back Upon Twenty-five Years

In 1916 the American Santal Mission could look back upon twenty-five years of activity. It had no great visible results to show, but God had nevertheless bestowed His blessings upon it. Its endeavors had been like those of Ruth, the young Moabitish widow who went out into the field of the rich Boaz and gleaned ears of grain after the reapers.

The first thirteen years of the Santal Mission have already passed in review, and so we shall only note some of the events of the next twelve years.

The average annual income from 1901 to 1906 had been almost the same as during the preceding five-year periods. It had been about \$4,500.00. With the five-year period from 1907 to 1911 there was a small increase, the annual average being

\$6,485.49, and during the next period, from 1912 until 1916 it had increased to \$8,481.64.

The total receipts from contributions during these first twenty-five years had amounted to \$140,678.83, an annual average of \$5,627.15. Not an imposing sum surely, and not a fast growth; but neither was Ruth out to gather sheaves, but to glean single ears of grain.

As to the organization, it has already been mentioned that Pastor N. G. Petersen was the first president of the Santal Mission Committee. He served until 1902 when Pastor A. J. Hulteng succeeded him and served continuously until far beyond the twenty-fifth anniversary of the mission. Three men served as vice-presidents during the period: Pastor M. F. Gjertsen from 1891 to 1901; Pastor A. J. Hulteng from 1901 to 1902, when he became president; and Pastor E. L. Jaastad from 1902 until after the end of the period. Except for the first one and a half years when Pastor J. C. Roseland and Mr. H. Bot-

tolsen served as secretary and treasurer, respectively, Professor J. H. Blegen was secretary-treasurer until long after the end of the period. Pastor N. G. Petersen was editor of *Santalmis-sionæren* from 1895 to 1897, after which Professor Blegen took over this work, with Pastor K. C. Holter as assistant editor.

Every year the annual meeting of the Santal Committee was held either in November or December, and always in Minneapolis. It was no great affair. A business session was held in



Rev. A. J. Hulteng, President, 1902-1938.
American Trustee, 1928-1938

the afternoon when reports were given by the president and the secretary-treasurer, and a few resolutions were passed, depending upon what matters were presented. Questions relating to the work and policies of the Santal Mission as a whole were seldom considered.

Arrangements were as a rule made for a public evening meeting in one of the churches of the city. One of the members of the committee would preach, most often the president, and the secretary-treasurer would give a brief oral report about the results of the work during the year just ended. Other members of the committee would open and close the meeting with devotion.

One of the vexing questions in regard to the Santal Mission was for many years the problem of the legal ownership to its considerable property holdings. In the eyes of the law, Børresen and Skrefsrud were the owners, although they themselves of course never made such a claim. When Børresen died in 1901, Skrefsrud became the sole legal owner. The committees in the home countries were aware of the situation and urged that something be done to clarify the matter. But the legal machinery worked very slowly, and the situation was further aggravated by the fact that Missionary Skrefsrud during the last few years of his life was suffering from a disease which had the effect of slowing down both his physical and mental powers.

By the time of his death in 1910 the matter had advanced so far that all of the mission property had been transferred to Pastor P. O. Bodding to be held in trust by him. He went at the problem with vigor, and the final outcome was that a Board of Trustees consisting of six members was created to hold the legal title in the name of the mission. Three of the trustees must reside in India, one in Denmark, one in Norway, and one in America. Professor Blegen became the first American trustee.

Although the arrangement is somewhat cumbersome, it was the best one obtainable. It has worked satisfactorily, and as far as the ownership of the mission property is concerned, it is fully safe.

It has already been stated that the members of the Santal Committee were elected for life. Election for a stated term of years was an improvement belonging to a later period. In case of the death of a member, a new one was elected in his place. The same rule obtained when a member resigned because of inability to attend the meetings, either because of illness or because he had moved far away.

The most important question and the most pressing problem was that of new missionaries, and it remained so during this whole period. Pastor and Mrs. Pederson had gone out in 1904, and while there may have been some private inquiries, it is not before in 1909 that we again read about this matter in the minutes of the Santal Committee. In that year it contacted two young pastors, S. J. Brekke of Hauge's Synod and L. C. Fossum of the United Church, but with no positive results.

Among the early workers for the awakening of a new interest in the mission among Danish Lutherans in this country, two men stand out prominently, Mr. Jens Dixen, a laypreacher in the United Danish Church, and Rev. L. Henningsen, a pastor in the Danish Lutheran Church. Both of them knew Børresen and Skrefsrud personally. Dixen had visited Santalistan and spoke frequently about the mission both at meetings and at the school he later built in North Dakota. Henningsen also worked faithfully to enlighten people in regard to the work, among other things by taking subscriptions and serving as distributor for *Santal Posten*, the Danish organ for the Santal Mission. In 1911 Pastor Henningsen and Mr. Dixen were elected members of the American Santal Committee, thus giving it a larger personnel and a wider constituency.

Meanwhile the foreign mission interest was growing in the Danish churches. The United Danish Church had already started its own successful mission enterprise in Japan. Friends of foreign missions in the Danish Church sent steadily-increasing gifts to the Santal Mission as well as to other Danish mission societies, but many wished that the church might have a mission of its own to support. The matter was discussed in the church

papers. In a series of articles, Rev. J. C. Aaberg pointed out that while it was highly desirable that the Danish Church should undertake a definite work for foreign missions, it would be impractical for a synod as small as the Danish Church to start a foreign mission of its own. For if the work should succeed, it would soon outgrow the ability of the church to support it. And he therefore recommended that the Danish Church should affiliate itself with the Santal Mission to which it could not only be permitted to send money, but also, as the cooperative enterprise that mission was, to send missionaries and have a voice in its management. The idea appeared to win general approval, and Rev. Aaberg, therefore, presented a proposal to the Danish Church to the effect that it should officially ally itself with the Santal Mission and work for its support. The proposal was to be discussed and voted upon at the annual convention of the church which that year, 1913, was to be held in the Danish Church at Grayling, Michigan, of which two good friends of the mission, the venerable Rev. P. Kjølhed, and his warm-hearted and mission-minded wife, Karoline Kjølhed, were in charge.

In 1913 Pastor and Mrs. M. A. Pederson came home on their first furlough. They visited relatives and spoke at a number of meetings on the West Coast and came to Minneapolis on June 5. Pastor Bodding had written to the Santal Committee: "You must by all means be careful with Missionary Pederson who the last two years before his furlough has been in quite poor health." The Santal Committee had no doubt also good intentions in this respect, but Pederson had other ideas. Within the next month he visited the annual conventions of the Lutheran Free Church, Hauge's Synod, the Lutheran Brethren, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in the order mentioned. At all these conventions he spoke the cause of the Santal Mission. Rev. Aaberg had conferred extensively with Prof. Blegen about his proposal and informed him that it would be brought before the convention. And it seems providential, that at the very mo-

ment the proposal was to be taken up for discussion, the convention received a telegram from Prof. Blegen stating that Rev. M. A. Pederson was on his way to Grayling and would arrive there that afternoon. After the reading of this telegram, the convention voted to postpone the discussion of the proposal until the following day and to have Rev. Pederson speak at the evening meeting.

That meeting will never be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to be present. Pederson was an excellent speaker with the ability to blend humor and earnestness into a serious appeal for the cause he loved. And he was at his best that night. At a session the following morning the convention unanimously voted that the synod should ally itself with the Santal Mission and help to support its work, and that a committee of three members should be elected to direct it. At the following election, Rev. A. Dan was elected president, J. C. Aaberg secretary, and Mrs. Karoline Kjølhede treasurer of the committee.

For a number of years the work of the committee was confined to awakening of interest and gathering funds for the cause. In this work, Mrs. Kjølhede, who was an excellent writer and possessed an extensive knowledge and a warm heart for the mission cause, was especially active, writing numerous articles in the papers of the synod and speaking at meetings wherever these could be arranged. Rev. Aaberg also traveled extensively and lectured about the mission. And the activity of the committee found a ready response so that the contributions to the work already the first year increased from a few hundred to between two and three thousand dollars, and in a few years to about five thousand.

Besides visiting the different annual conventions in the summer of 1913 Pastor Pederson visited a number of congregations, always pleading the cause of the Santal Mission. At an extra meeting of the Santal Committee he made an appeal for doubling the annual receipts, and tentative plans were formulated for this purpose. An extended itinerary was arranged

both for him and his wife. For both of them it became a very busy year until they left for India in July, 1914.

In the meantime Pastor Pederson had published his *Sketches from Santalistan*. It was a book of 186 pages, written in a pleasing, humorous vein and illustrated with no less than 65 pictures.

In the Spring of 1914 Mr. Olai O. Arten, a senior in the United Church Seminary, offered his services as a missionary in Santalistan. He was recommended by the committee and called by the authorities on the field. Pastor Arten was a man of ripe years and had had considerable experience as a teacher.

In the meantime World War I broke out. Upon request of the executive committee on the mission field Pastor Bodding stated in a letter to the American Santal Mission Committee that "as long as the war lasts, there can be no question about sending any missionary. Not even Pedersons ought to come out before peace is restored."

After visiting relatives in Norway Pastor and Mrs. Arten returned to America, and upon advice of the Santal Committee he accepted a call from a parish in this country. When after several years the war had come to an end, he did not feel that he was so situated that he could go to the foreign mission field.

Pastor and Mrs. Pederson spent some months in Denmark and Norway, visiting a considerable number of places and speaking the cause of the Santal Mission to thousands. They returned to America just in time to attend the annual meeting of the Santal Committee which was held on December 10, 1914. Their hope to return to India had been frustrated on account of the war, but their stay in Denmark and Norway had been richly blessed by God.

At the public meeting in the evening Pastor Pederson uttered these memorable words: "There is one circumstance that has gladdened my heart greatly both in Denmark and Norway, as well as here in America. It is that the Santal Mission seems to have an ability to gather people of different religious camps and spiritual trends. In the love of this mission all is forgotten that

otherwise tended to separate brother from brother, and it binds them together in a harmonious and faithful cooperation."

Once more Pedersons took up the task of traveling in the congregations until in September, 1915, when a way was opened for them to return to Santalistan. It had been no vacation, only a change in an intensive missionary activity. In a farewell message to the friends of the Santal Mission he expressed his gratitude to God for the pleasant and fruitful visit in the homelands, and also for the opportunity which now had been opened to return to India.

At its annual meeting in November, 1916, the Santal Committee was again wrestling with the question of securing another missionary for Santalistan. The minutes state that "among the matters considered at the meeting was also the question of finding a new worker for Santalistan." Twenty-five years had passed, and yet only one missionary couple had been sent to India.

As early as in 1909 the Santal Committee had invited Pastor P. O. Bodding to visit America. He had succeeded Missionary Skrefsrud as leader. He accepted the invitation with thanks, but not before in 1916 was he able to fulfill his promise. He arrived in Minneapolis on June 7 on his way to Norway and could only remain in America about two weeks on account of previous engagements. Still, he was able to visit no less than five annual church conventions, namely those of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church; the United Danish Lutheran Church; Hauge's Synod; the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. At all of them he was given an opportunity to bring a greeting from the Santal Mission. He also attended an extra meeting of the Santal Committee where he told more in detail about the mission, its problems, and its victories.

The Danish Committee for the Santal Mission was also trying to solve the problem of workers and looked hopefully toward the day when the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church might have its own representative in the mission field. In the fall of 1915

the president of the Committee, Pastor Adam Dan, wrote in the Danish Santal Mission paper, *Santal Posten*: "I am still of the opinion that our work for missions will not show any active progress until we have our own missionary. No church body has ever suffered or languished because it had carried on mission work. On the other hand, it can no doubt be proved that a waning love for this work in the Kingdom of God will spell retrogression in the life of the congregations, a retrogression that can end in ruin."

The time was not far off when this church body was to set an example for all the others that in some way or another had come in touch with the Santal Mission.

At the close of the first twenty-five-year period of the American Santal Mission the committee consisted of twelve members: Pastors Hulteng, Jaastad, Petersen, and Roseland of the United Church; Pastors K. C. Holter and O. S. Meland of Hauge's Synod; Evangelist O. M. Anderson and Professors Blegen and Helland of the Lutheran Free Church; Mr. T. Rygh of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren; Pastor L. Henningsen of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church; and Mr. Jens Dixen of the United Danish Lutheran Church.

7

Changes That Meant Progress

While no effort was made to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the American Santal Mission in 1916, the fiftieth anniversary of the Santal Mission itself was not only made the occasion for remembrance in India, Denmark and Norway, but also in America.

The year 1917 was an important milestone in the history of Norwegian-American Lutheranism in that three church bodies, the Norwegian Synod, the Hauge's Synod, and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America were united into one church body under the name of The Norwegian Lutheran

Church in America, a name that has lately been changed to The Evangelical Lutheran Church. While this in itself was a very important event, it was of no special significance as far as the Santal Mission was concerned, except that the former Norwegian Synod came into the same unofficial contact with it as the two other church bodies that constituted the new organization. It brought no change in the personnel of the Santal Committee.

It had been the intention of Missionary Bodding to return to India by way of Siberia in the spring of 1917, but this plan could not be realized because of the war. Consequently, he had to go by way of America again. He had also with him three other missionaries, Pastor Holger Winding and Miss Anna Jensen and Miss Sognli. Their visit in Minneapolis lasted only one week, but this short stay was used to the utmost. Both Bodding and Miss Jensen spoke several times to different groups. He delivered a lecture at the Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, formerly the United Church Seminary, and four at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. Pastor Winding visited several Danish congregations. The missionaries had also stopped over in Chicago for a few days and had used the time extremely well.

It was as though a new route between Scandinavia and India had been discovered. Since that time a number of Danish and Norwegian Santal missionaries have gone back and forth this way, especially during World War II, and it may be said with-



Rev. J. C. Aaberg, Vice president, 1927—.
President Danish Committee, 1924—.
Member of Executive Committee

out boasting that those who have served as secretaries of the American Santal Committee have had many rich opportunities to be of assistance to them in different ways. There is also reason to hope that this has helped to bring both the missionaries and the Santal Committees in the home countries into a closer fellowship, a not unimportant asset to the spiritual well-being of the mission.

The American Santal Committee held its twenty-sixth annual meeting in Minneapolis on December 1st, 1917. Eight members were present. Pastor Henningsen had moved to California and had resigned because he would not be able to attend the meetings. Pastor J. C. Aaberg was elected to succeed him.

To this meeting was presented a budget proposal for the Santal Mission for the ensuing year. It amounted to \$45,000.00, of which the American Committee was asked to furnish \$10,000.00, a little over 22%. So far the committee had considered itself as purely auxiliary, without responsibility for a definite share of the total expenses of the mission. With only one missionary couple in the field it had always contributed a good deal more than what was needed for their work and maintenance. However, it was, of course, not meant as an assessment, and the new arrangement furnished both an incentive and a definite goal for the work from year to year. The committee voted in favor of the budget.

The treasurer reported that the income during the year had amounted to \$7,778.75.

A letter from Missionary Boddington was read, stating that it would hardly be advisable to send any new missionaries on account of the war. Nor was it likely that entrance permits to India could be obtained.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Santal Mission was celebrated in Trinity Church on Sunday, December second.

At the morning service which was led by the pastor, Rev. W. M. Hagen, the anniversary sermon was preached by the president of the Santal Committee, Pastor A. J. Hulteng. He had taken for his text John 18:33-37.

The afternoon session was opened with Scripture reading and prayer by Pastor Jaastad and words of welcome by Pastor Hagen. Pastor Hulteng spoke about the work for the Santal Mission in America and Professor Blegen gave an historical review of the work of the Santal Mission in India. Mr. Dixen related some very interesting incidents from a visit in Santalistan.

Sunday evening Pastor K. C. Holter opened the last session with Scripture reading and prayer after which Pastor N. G. Petersen spoke on "Impressions from the visit of Skrefsrud in America." Pastor Aaberg spoke about the life and work of Missionary Børresen and mentioned in that connection the activity for the Santal Mission among the Danish Lutherans in America. In closing Professor Helland spoke on "The significance of prayer in missions," basing his remarks on Luke 18:1-8.

Both in the forenoon, afternoon, and evening there was much beautiful singing, both by the audience, the church choir, and the Augsburg Glee Club. Especially impressive was the rendering of two songs by the Glee Club, "I saw Him in childhood with eyes brightly beaming," by Vilhelm Birkedal, and "Behold the host arrayed in White," by H. A. Brorson, Professor H. N. Hendrickson singing the solo part. The large audience remained standing during the singing of the latter hymn as a memorial to those Santal Mission workers and friends both on the mission field and here at home who had entered the eternal rest.

Then the president of the Santal Committee thanked Trinity Congregation and all others who had contributed their share in making this a memorable occasion. In closing the audience sang Martha Clausen's hymn, "And now we must bid one another farewell," whereupon Pastor Hagen pronounced the benediction.

Just as the large audience was about to leave, the Trinity Church Choir intoned the song, "God be with you till we meet again." No one moved until the last words had died away. The

festivity was at an end, but the memory of it still lingers with some of those who had the good fortune to be present.

Pedersons had returned to India in the fall of 1915. The Missionary Conference had placed them in Assam as leaders of the mission work there. The climate of Assam is very dangerous, but there, too, the Gospel must be proclaimed and someone must proclaim it. The missionaries may not prefer to go there, but they willingly take their turn.

In the winter of 1918, word was received that both Pederson and his wife had contracted the dreaded jungle fever, and that they very likely would have to return home as soon as possible. At this time Pastor Pederson wrote to *Santalmissionæren*: "The jungle fever here in Assam has been hard on us. For each new attack the strength has become less, while the work increases. And when we saw that we were not able any longer to take care of the work with which we had been entrusted, it became clear to us that the only right thing for us to do was to withdraw. It is the work that is the main consideration."

World War I was not yet over, and passage was difficult to obtain. But after a pleasant journey Pedersons arrived in San Francisco September 6, greatly improved in health, although they still suffered occasional attacks of fever. After a brief stay on the West Coast they came to Minneapolis.

At the annual meeting of the Santal Committee held December 3, 1918, the treasurer reported that \$10,014.23 had been received during the year, of which \$2,600.00 consisted of testamentary gifts. Twelve or thirteen thousand dollars was expected from America for the next year.

Mr. Jens Dixen had tendered his resignation as member of the Santal Committee as it was difficult for him to attend the meetings. He was asked to remain on the committee, and Pastor P. M. Petersen was elected as an additional member from the United Danish Lutheran Church.

It was decided that for the future the annual meetings were to be held about the first of September instead of about the first of December. For the finances this would have the effect that the next fiscal year would consist of only nine months.

After a short rest Pastor Pederson again took up his travels in the congregations in the spring of 1919. He spent some time in the Danish and Norwegian congregations in the New England States and also attended Dr. White's Biblical Seminary in New York.

At the annual meeting of the Santal Committee September 2, 1919, the treasurer was able to report an income of \$12,307.07, of which \$2,200.00 consisted of testamentary gifts.

Meanwhile the Danish Committee looked hopefully toward a day when the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church might have its own representative on the field, and in 1916 Miss Dagmar Miller wrote to the committee and offered to go. She was born at Hampton, Iowa, of Danish parents, and had attended Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa, and Iowa State Normal, and was at the time working as a school teacher. At the annual convention of the church at Newell, Iowa, the same year that her application was to be considered, Pastor Bodding was present. He informed the committee that there was for the time being no need of women teachers but that there was a serious need of a nurse. On hearing this, Miss Miller resolutely decided to train for the position, which she did by enrolling for the nurses' training course at the Norwegian Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis. She finished her training there in 1919, and enrolled for a short course of Bible study at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

Pastor Aaberg was unable to attend the annual meeting of the Santal Committee that year, but informed the meeting by letter that Miss Miller would soon be ready to go to the mission field, and that the Danish Evangelical Church had at its recent annual convention declared that it was ready to send her out. It had thus by official action decided to join in the work for the Santal Mission — the first Lutheran church body in Amer-



Dagmar Miller, Missionary,
1920-1941

ica to make this mission one of its regular common endeavors.

It was also reported to the committee that a group of missionaries were expected from Norway and Denmark on their way to Santalistan. Pastor Kristian Tromborg had already arrived and was studying in the East, as was also a Danish lady, Miss Anna Marie Jensen; Pastor Arne Thu and wife, and Miss Anna Pedersen were soon to arrive from Norway. Thus there was no lack of opportunity to be of assistance in different ways.

Miss Miller was commissioned to her work on February 7, 1920, by the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. She was to leave San Francisco on March 17, but the journey had to be postponed twice because the entrance permit to India had not been issued. Not before October 9th was she able to leave San Francisco. She arrived in Santalistan December 1, 1920.

Pastor and Mrs. Pederson kept up their constant travels in the interest of the Santal Mission, he in the East and she in the West. Thus she spoke at sixteen meetings in Nebraska in two weeks on her way to the West Coast. Then came a request from Norway that they be allowed to work there for some months. It was granted on the condition that they must return by the end of October as that was the best season for work in America. In the meantime a request came from Denmark to "borrow" them for work there for a few months. As a result, they left America the last part of May, 1920, and did not return until the beginning of June, 1921, after having spent a year of intensive activity in the two countries. They had had a few weeks of well-earned rest; "but it is not a complete rest; both of us have held several meetings," wrote Pastor Pederson.

To the annual meeting of the Santal Committee September 2, 1920, it was reported that four young persons had indicated their interest in going out in the service of the Santal Mission. At that meeting Pastor Jaastad resigned as vice-president. He had been a member of the Santal Committee since 1897 and vice-president since 1902, but now his advanced age made it difficult for him to attend the meetings. Pastor P. M. Petersen was elected in his stead.

When the American Santal Committee held its thirtieth annual meeting September 6, 1921, the president, Pastor Hulteng, was on a journey to Europe during which he had a welcome opportunity to confer with both the Norwegian and Danish committees.

Another five-year period had passed. The average annual income had been increased to \$11,229.24.

The most important question before this meeting was whether or not Pastor and Mrs. Pederson were to return to the mission field at this time. After serious consideration and a conference with Pedersons it was decided to ask them to go as soon as possible.

Pastor Bernhard Helland was present at the meeting upon invitation. He offered his services to the mission on the condition that he be permitted to serve his congregation one year more and then to use a couple of years for further training for mission work.

Pedersons left New York December 15, 1921, going by way of the Mediterranean. From Port Said they made a side trip to the Holy Land and had also an opportunity to visit several of the most interesting places in Egypt. They landed in Bombay February 3, 1922, and went across India to Calcutta and Santalistan by rail. They had been assigned to Kaerabani Boys' School as their new field of activity. Later on they took up the work at Benagaria. From there Pastor Pederson wrote: "We are up over our ears in work; but we enjoy it."

8

New Problems

To the annual meeting of the Santal Committee August 31, 1922, the treasurer reported that the income had been \$7,351.71. This included a testamentary gift of \$200.00. There was a deficit in the account of *Santalmissionæren* of \$130.67.

These figures revealed a serious situation not at once apparent

to the casual observer. Compared with the previous year there had been a decrease in contributions amounting to over \$6,000.00 or over 45%. But leaving out of consideration the testamentary gifts, the receipts in 1921-22 had been slightly above those of 1920-21. It was the testamentary gifts that caused the difference.

Testamentary gifts are, of course, just as welcome as any other gifts, and often they come in larger amounts. But they carry a sad message: It is the last contribution from this source. It was the old standbys who in this way were bidding farewell, those venerable men and women who "had heard Skrefsrud." Would the younger generation walk in the footsteps of their elders?

There was a considerable deficit in the account of *Santalmissionæren*. This was something new, and it was an ill omen. For we learn that a large number of subscribers were in arrears, some for several years. The explanation is simple: The older people had read the paper and had been edified by it. They had sent their contributions to the mission, and with them also their subscription to the paper. But it was published in the Norwegian language which was becoming more and more foreign to the younger people. Seldom, if ever, did they read the paper, and the mission whose messenger it was, remained alien to them. When father or mother died, some would write and have the subscription cancelled; but many did not even



Rev. O. S. Bjerkestrand and wife,
Missionaries, 1925—

do that. Hence the ever-growing subscriptions in arrears; hence, also, the deficit in the accounts of the paper.

At the root of this deplorable condition lay the transition from Norwegian to English in all our church work. It was unavoidable that there would be many losses along the way. As for the Santal Committee, it was not blind to the problem, and honest attempts were made to solve it.

After a number of attempts at a compromise solution, it was at last decided in 1939 to go completely over to the use of English. The policy of using both languages in the same issue, as well as publishing alternate issues in English and Norwegian had been tried, but had not proved very successful. The change did not come too early; it is to be feared that in many cases it came too late. Nevertheless, *The Santal Missionary* has gained more new friends than it has lost old ones.

While there was a considerable deficit in the account of *Santalmisjonæren* in 1922, arrears in subscription was not the only reason, however. The cost of printing the paper had more than doubled while the subscription price had been increased by less than 43%. The real worth of the paper has, of course, never consisted in making a little financial profit; it has consisted in creating interest in the work for the Kingdom of God, and in this regard the gain has more than outweighed the small financial losses. The steady increase in contributions, at least after the great depression, also shows that the cause of the Santal Mission has been steadily gaining ground among the younger generation of our church people.

9

They Rest from Their Labors

Little by little the ranks of the early friends and supporters of the Santal Mission in general, as well as of the members of the Santal Committee, were thinning out. The first one to pass away was Pastor I. Eistensen in 1901. The next one was Mr. H. Bottolsen in 1905, and then Professor S. Oftedal in 1911.

Pastor M. F. Gjertsen died in 1913. He had, however, ceased to be a member in 1901.

Pastor N. G. Petersen, the first president of the Santal Committee and the first editor of *Santalmissionæren*, passed away June 23, 1923, and only a little over a month later another devoted member of the committee, Evangelist O. M. Anderson,



Rev. J. Girtz and wife, Missionaries,
1925-1938

entered into the sabbath rest of the Lord. Their zeal for the cause of the Kingdom of God never waned.

Only a few years afterwards several other deaths occurred. But as the Word of the Lord abideth forever, so also does the work for His Kingdom.

At the annual meeting of the Santal Committee on September 13, 1923, Pastor O. M. Norby of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America and Mr. Sivert Thompson of the Lutheran Free Church, both living in Minneapolis, were elected to succeed those who had passed away.

At this meeting the treasurer reported an income of \$8,502.47. This did not look promising in view of the fact that the expected contribution from America for the budget of the next year had been placed at \$12,400.00.

Upon medical examination Pastor B. A. Helland had been advised to defer going to India for at least two years. In the meantime he was continuing his preparation and the secretary

was asked to write to him and encourage him to remain steadfast in his purpose.

On November 7, 1923, Pastor K. C. Holter passed away. In him the Santal Mission had lost another devoted friend and the Santal Committee a willing worker. He had hardly been absent from a meeting during the twenty-nine years that he had been a member.

Early in the year 1924 *Santalmissionæren* published an appeal by Pastor R. Rosenlund, the new general secretary, asking for a young man to come out to work as assistant superintendent of the tea garden of the mission in Assam. What was needed was a man used to farming and handling of machinery, a man "with some knowledge of bookkeeping, with good health, good humor, and ability to cooperate with others, and above all a man with an urge to do missionary work."

These were difficult times for the Santal Mission financially, partly caused by quite unfavorable exchange on Danish and Norwegian crowns. It was of the greatest importance to have efficient and dependable help in running the tea garden, as the mission received considerable revenue from it.

Then came word from India that two new missionaries had been called upon recommendation of the Santal Committee, Mr. Joseph Girtz, a student in Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, and Miss Anna Olesen, both members of the United Danish Lutheran Church. Besides having completed nurses' training, Miss Olesen had also had several years of practical religious education.

The appeal of Pastor Rosenlund for an assistant superintendent for the tea garden was answered by Mr. Ole S. Bjerkestrand of Radcliffe, Iowa. His offer was accepted, and since both he and Girtz were engaged to be married, it meant no less than five new workers in all. Bjerkestrand was a member of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. He had attended Radcliffe High School and also the academy at Red Wing Seminary and the Lutheran Bible Institute, at that time located

in St. Paul, but later moved to Minneapolis. In the meantime it took time before the entrance permits were issued.

After a long and trying season of waiting, the day dawned at last when the young missionaries could leave for India. It was Pastor Girtz and his fiancée, Miss Mabel Hansen, both of Fresno, California; Mr. Bjerkestrand and his fiancée, Miss Hazel Alberts, from Radcliffe, Iowa, and Miss Anna Olesen from Omaha, Nebraska. They left Vancouver, British Columbia, March 6, 1925, and arrived at Benagaria April 21. Some of them were soon to experience severe illness, but the Lord held His protecting hand over them and restored them to health. — In 1904 the first two missionaries had gone out to Santalistan from America; now their number had increased to eight. There was praise to God in the hearts of many a friend of the Santal Mission.



Anna Olesen, Missionary,
1925-1931

This sending out of missionaries to Santalistan was something unique in the history of the American Santal Mission, not only in regard to numbers, but also because this group of young people represented two new church bodies, The United Danish Lutheran Church and The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. So now two Norwegian and two Danish church groups would be represented in the mission.

It will be appropriate at this point to make special mention of the further development of the participation of the two Danish church bodies in the work for the Santal Mission.

In 1924, Rev. A. Dan resigned as president of the Danish committee, and Rev. Aaberg was elected to succeed him, a position he still holds. Contributions to the mission increased steadily, and the committee began to look for another missionary. In 1925, Mr. Erling Ostergaard, a medical student at the University of Minnesota offered his service. Ostergaard was a

son of Rev. Christian Ostergaard, a pioneer pastor in the Danish church and widely known as an author and poet. The committee was, therefore, very happy to receive Erling Ostergaard's application, and to recommend its acceptance to the American Santal Committee. At its annual meeting in 1925, the latter recommended him to the authorities on the mission field.

The Santal Committee of the Danish church is only an auxiliary committee responsible for the work in that synod. At first it worked quite independently, collecting funds and sending these directly to India. But as the work increased and missionaries were sent out, it steadily entered into a closer co-operation with the American Santal Committee, and the report of its later work is, therefore, woven into the history of that committee and is so closely related to it that it need not be described separately.

With the sending of Miss Anna Olesen and Pastor Joseph Girtz and wife to Santalistan in 1925, the United Danish Lutheran Church had also come into a close contact with the Santal Mission. While a still closer contact belongs to a later time, it would seem natural to mention it here.

While the United Danish Church had its own mission field in Japan, the Santal Mission still had many friends in that body who continued to give it their support, and speakers for the mission were freely welcomed in its congregations. During the years, four missionaries affiliated with the synod, Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Girtz, Miss Olesen, and Dr. Dagmar Pedersen, have been sent to the field. The synod had through the years been represented on the American Committee, and a considerable number of members wished that it might enter into a closer alliance with the work. But with its growing responsibility toward its mission in Japan, it felt unable to accept additional responsibilities. The beginning of the war between America and Japan, however, forced the synod to recall its missionaries from that country, and brought its work there to a temporary standstill. The thought of a closer affiliation with the Santal Mission was, therefore, again brought to the fore, and in 1945 the synod voted to apply for affiliation with the Santal Mission on

approximately the same basis as that of the Danish Lutheran Church. The application was gladly accepted by the following annual meeting of the American Santal Committee, and the United Danish Church, or United Evangelical Lutheran Church as it is now named, thus became the second church body in America to become officially affiliated with the Santal Mission.

Turning again to the history of the Santal Mission Committee, we note that at the annual meeting held in September, 1924, Pastor C. O. Rondestvedt was elected a member of the Committee instead of Pastor Jaastad, and Pastor S. M. Stenby instead of Pastor Holter. Stenby was the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ("Eielsen's Synod"), and thus this small church body also received its representative on the Santal Committee. There had for years been several in this group who had been generous contributors.

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren had also been represented on the Santal Committee, first by Mr. T. Rygh, Hader, Minnesota, and later by Mr. Otto Ruud, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Thus no less than six Lutheran church groups, four Norwegian and two Danish, had little by little come officially or unofficially in contact with the American Santal Mission, a fact that was officially recognized at the time of the reorganization of the Santal Mission Committee in 1934.

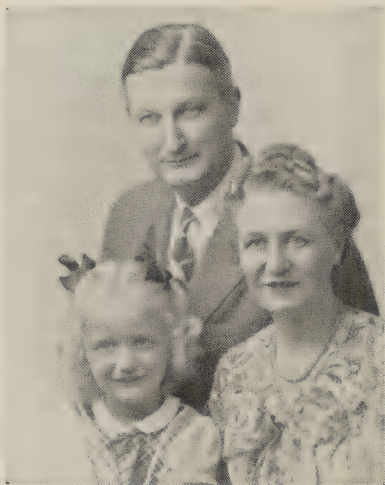
It was becoming an unwritten law that in making up the budget of the Santal Mission, the Missionary Conference in the field divided the expected income as follows: First, they subtracted the expected income from the tea garden. Then they divided the balance in five equal parts, two for Norway, two for Denmark, and one for America. In other words, America was expected to contribute 20% of the entire sum needed from the home countries. This was, however, a goal that was seldom reached; especially was this true during the difficult years after the first World War.

When the Santal Committee gathered for its annual meeting in September, 1925, one of the first matters of business was to hear the financial report as usual. The income had amounted

to \$13,808.41. The sum expected as America's share for the next year was \$14,800.00, and the committee decided that it would endeavor to furnish this sum.

It was reported that the mission found itself in very difficult financial circumstances and that the missionaries had voluntarily taken a 10% cut in salaries and also had renounced on certain other items of income. The Santal Committee passed a resolution commending them for their sacrificial spirit. It also expressed the hope that by this act on their part the friends of the mission at home might be urged to a greater zeal for the cause.

It was decided to recommend Pastor Bernhard Helland of the Lutheran Free Church and Dr. Erling Ostergaard of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church as missionaries to Santalistan, the former to go out in 1926 and the latter in 1927. It was likewise decided to invite Pastor Rosenlund to visit



Rev. B. A. Helland and wife, Missionaries,
1926—. Secretary-treasurer and Editor,
1942-1946

America during his intended trip to Denmark and Norway in 1926.

Shortly before Christmas, 1925, Pastor Pederson published *Fra Santalistan og Jorden rundt* (From Santalistan and Around the World), a book of 339 pages. The author serves as a very interesting guide to his readers, not only through Santalistan, but also to many of the most renowned places in India, as well as in other countries, such as Denmark, Norway, and England. In the preface he gives the following reason for writing the book: "I had such a desire to share with the friends at home

some of that which I have experienced, and to show them some of the things I have seen. I have no other excuse."

Miss Dagmar Miller had contracted a case of malignant fever, and it was evident that she was very much in need of a furlough. Her father was also very ill and was not expected to live very long. In Bombay she learned, when on her way home, that he had already passed away. She reached her home in Hampton, Iowa, on January 4, 1926, already considerably improved in health by a pleasant journey across the Pacific Ocean.

On August 23, 1926, Pastor Bernhard Helland and his wife Muriel, nee Nelson, started on their way to Santalistan where they arrived in the latter part of October. At a farewell service the evening before they left Minneapolis, Professor Blegen had laid upon their hearts the words of the Apostle Paul: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love."

The Santal Committee held its thirty-fifth annual meeting September 2, 1926. The income for the year had amounted to \$15,431.39, the largest amount in the history of the mission so far. The expected budget for the next year had been fixed at \$16,500.00.

It was reported at this meeting that Mr. Jens Dixen had left for Denmark with the intention of spending his last days there. Pastor and Mrs. Rosenlund were expected to visit America in the spring of 1927 on their way from Scandinavia to India.

And so another five-year period had passed by. The average annual income had been \$11,208.46, a slight increase over the previous period. The American Santal Mission was now thirty-five years old. The last ten years had brought several changes, but through it all the Lord had revealed His grace and mercy.

Through Many Tribulations

In the spring of 1927, Pastor R. Rosenlund, superintendent of the Santal Mission, and Pastor Aage Krohn, secretary of the Danish Santal Committee, paid a much-appreciated visit to America. Part of the time they traveled together, part of the time they went each their own way. They spoke at over ninety

meetings from the New England States to the Pacific Coast. As was natural, they visited more Danish than Norwegian congregations. The visit lasted three months.

To the many who heard these men, their testimony came as a mild spiritual zephyr. While they uttered no criticism, one could not avoid the feeling that the Santal Mission was a cause for which we in America had done comparatively little. It



Erling Ostergaard, M.D., and wife. Missionaries,
1927 (1936) —

was true as it was stated in *Santalmissionæren* in regard to their visit: "We need to be exhorted to love and good deeds. We need warm hearts."

At the annual convention of the Danish Evangelical Church in 1927 Miss Dagmar Miller was ready to return to India from her first furlough, and Dr. Erling Ostergaard to go out for the first time as a medical missionary. A farewell service was held for both of them. They left New York October 13 via Denmark where Dr. Ostergaard was to remain for a year for further training.

To the annual meeting of the Santal Committee it was reported that the income had amounted to \$13,257.66, and Pastor Aaberg reported that the Danish Committee had had an income of about \$5,000.00. Most of this amount had already been sent to India. The total receipts had thus been \$18,350.00. The budget for the next year had been estimated at \$16,600.00, and the Santal Committee agreed to try to raise this amount in co-operation with the Danish Committee. As the vice-president, Pastor P. M. Petersen, had moved to California, Pastor J. C. Aaberg was elected to this position which he has held continuously since that time.

The next year was to be marked by bereavement both for individual members of the Santal Committee and their families, as well as for the Santal Mission friends in general.

Pastor L. Henningsen went to rest in the Lord December 10, 1927. He had been among the first to plead the cause of the Santal Mission among the Danish Lutherans in America and had been a member of the Santal Committee for over fifteen years. It was said over his grave: "The work for bringing blessing in Jesus' name to the poor Santals has been to him a work of love for fully fifty years."

On March 14, 1928, Pastor O. S. Meland passed away. He had served on the Santal Committee for nearly twenty years.

And then came the hardest blow. On August 8, 1928, Professor Blegen had attended a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Augustana Synod, the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran Free Church foreign mission boards. It was an oppressively warm day, and the exertion was probably too much for him. A couple of days later he suffered a stroke and was unconscious most of the time until he went to sleep in Jesus on September second. Shortly before he took sick he had sent out notice about the annual meeting of the Santal Committee, to be held September 5. That was the day of his funeral.

After a hurried business meeting in the forenoon, the members of the Santal Committee attended the funeral. The pastor

of Trinity Congregation, Rev. T. O. Burntvedt, preached the funeral sermon, taking for his text Acts 26:19: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Professor Helland spoke on Luke 12:37: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching," relating some of the outstanding traits about the departed and his work.

Greetings were given by Pastor H. J. Urdahl from the Lutheran Free Church; by Dr. George Sverdrup from Augsburg Seminary; by Pastor A. J. Hulteng from the Santal Committee, and by Pastor C. K. Solberg from the Zion Society for Israel. Professor H. N. Hendrickson, for many years a colleague and close friend of the deceased, sang several beautiful solos.

That the Santal Committee in Professor Blegen had lost its most outstanding member will not be questioned by anyone who knew the quiet, kindly, deeply spiritual mission friend. He had a prominent part in active mission work for forty-one years, in the Zion Society for Israel, on the Santal Committee, and on the Lutheran Board of Missions.

To the brief meeting of the Santal Committee it was reported that the income for the year had been \$12,477.85, besides a legacy of \$500.00 from which only the interest was to be used. The Danish Committee had had an income of about \$5,300.00, thus making a total of nearly \$17,800.00. The part of the budget for 1929 expected from America had been fixed at \$17,400.00.

Pastor W. M. Hagen was elected a member of the Santal Committee instead of Professor Blegen, and Professor Helland was elected secretary-treasurer. He declared that he could not accept the election on account of too much other work, but promised to take care of the office routine temporarily. It was left with the executive committee to find a man to take the place left vacant by the death of Professor Blegen.

It was very fortunate that Pastor and Mrs. M. A. Pederson were soon to come home on furlough. They arrived in Minneapolis November 28, 1928, and on December 4 the Santal Committee held an extra meeting to hear report directly from the mission field and also to consider the election of a successor

to Professor Blegen. It was agreed that Pastor Pederson after a short period of rest should take over the work until the next annual meeting. He started about February 1, 1929.

Pastor A. J. Hulteng was elected American trustee for the Santal Mission instead of Professor Blegen.

11

Progress in Organization and Operation

At the extra meeting of the Santal Committee December 4, 1928, it was decided to change the time of the annual meetings from around the first of September to around the middle of May. The following years saw a number of changes of much greater importance than this one and they were all for the advancement of the work.

As has been the case with most religious undertakings of the same nature as the American Santal Mission, the work was at first done gratis. Mr. H. Bottolsen had worked gratis the year and a half that he was treasurer of the Santal Mission, and had also done about all of the secretarial work which had entailed a great deal of correspondence. The gratuity of \$100.00 voted him was no adequate compensation for his work.

It was so also with Pastor Petersen who edited *Santalmis-ionæren* for a couple of years. And for many years Professor Blegen served as secretary-treasurer and editor for almost no compensation. A little more was paid him after he had resigned from his teaching work; but even then the compensation was entirely out of proportion to the service he rendered.

This is not said as a criticism, nor for the sake of praising Professor Blegen or anyone else. Any person with the right spirit is willing to work long extra hours if he loves the cause of the Kingdom of God.

But if there is growth and progress, the day will come sooner or later when a man's full time and strength is needed, and he will in most instances be dependent upon a reasonable salary for a living.

Nor is this all. If the activity is to prosper, there is need of an extensive promotional work, through pamphlets, leaflets, and personal correspondence. This entails considerable expense. And if the secretary-treasurer is to use a considerable part of his time for traveling, he needs dependable and competent help to take care of the routine work in the office. All this costs money, but it pays for itself many times over and in many different ways.

In the American Santal Mission the time had come when such a step had become imperative.

The Santal Committee held its thirty-eighth annual meeting May 14, 1929. The financial report showed that during the eight months since September 1, 1928, the receipts had amounted to \$9,982.46. It had already been decided that hereafter the fiscal year was to coincide with the calendar year, thus also coinciding with the fiscal year of the Santal Mission in general.



Rev. M. C. Dixen, Secretary-treasurer and Editor, 1931-1942 and 1946—

Pastor J. C. Roseland and Mr. Otto Ruud had passed away during the year, and Pastor M. C. Dixen of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and O. H. Sletten of the Lutheran Free Church were elected to fill the vacancies. Pastors Hulteng and Aaberg were re-elected president and vice-president, respectively, and Pastor M. A. Pederson was elected secretary-treasurer and editor of *Santalmissionæren*.

The Santal Committee was naturally very happy to be able to secure Pastor Pederson for the most important position in the organization. He was well acquainted with the work both at

home and on the mission field. Both he and his wife had rare gifts for vividly picturing the work and its needs, and there were more doors open to them in all the Norwegian and Danish church groups than to anyone else available for the position. Besides, he was now about sixty years old and had suffered considerably from fever so that it was generally taken for granted that they could not return to the mission field for another term.

Pastor Pederson had said very little during the meeting, and his silence had been taken as a sign that he would accept the position to which he had been elected. This was also correct enough in a sense, but the next morning he remarked to a close friend: "I could not sleep last night. Something went to pieces in my heart yesterday." Then it was revealed that both he and his wife had a deep yearning in their hearts to "go home" to India for another term. Now the way seemed to have been definitely closed. But they both entered upon a strenuous speaking activity while the work in the office was taken care of by a friend.

In the fall of 1929 Pastor Pederson produced another book, *In the Land of The Santals*, published by Fleming H. Revell & Co. It was a revised and considerably enlarged edition of his first book, *Sketches from Santalistan*.

The income for 1929 amounted to \$23,421.73. While this also included the last four months of 1928, it still was the high-water mark in the history of the American Santal Mission. It was also the first-fruit of the intensified work from the office, as indicated above. Seeding time calls for both toil and expense, but under the blessing of the Lord there comes a day when the toilers "shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them."

But Pastor Pederson had been told by his doctor that he would have to slow down his pace if he desired to live a while longer.

In March, 1930, Missionary Bjerkestrand and family came home on furlough after five years of strenuous work in Assam

where they had suffered a good deal from malaria fever, while Mrs. Bjerkestrand also had had a severe attack of the dreaded black water fever. At the time of the annual meeting of the Santal Committee on May 20, a welcome service was held in St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Pastor O. J. Norby had passed away during the year and Pastor B. K. Barstad was elected in his place.

Missionary Bernhard Hel-land who was principal of the Kaerabani Boys' School at the time, had mentioned in a letter the desirability of adding a high school department to that institution. In regard to this suggestion the Santal Committee passed the following resolution: "The Committee is happy to learn that the question of a high school has been brought up, and it heartily concurs in the tentative plan. We also pledge ourselves to take our part in the expenses connected therewith."

The American Santal Committee had set as its goal to gather \$20,000.00 in 1930.

But the depression had already set in. Only \$10,550.00 had been received by the first of September, and Pastor Pederson asked in *Santalmissionæren*: "Can we make it?" His answer was: "Let every friend of the mission place all that he has at the service of the Lord, and we shall succeed, not by our own strength, but by His power."

Then the sad news came that Dr. Ostergaard had been very ill from typhus and Mrs. Girtz had had a severe attack of black water fever. They had both recovered, but doctors in Calcutta



Dagmar Pedersen, M.D., Missionary,
1931—

had expressed fear that Dr. Ostergaard's lungs were affected. Fortunately, this proved to be erroneous.

While the goal of \$20,000.00 for 1930 was not reached, it brought joy to many a heart that as much as \$19,107.09 had been received in spite of the prevailing difficult financial situation. And neither Pastor Pederson nor his wife had spared themselves in the attempt to reach the goal.

Mr. Jens Dixen passed away January 12, 1931, in his native Denmark. He was then 73 years old. He had been a member of the Santal Committee for nearly twenty years. Mr. Dixen was a very interesting layman who had lived in or visited every continent in the world. It was said of him after his death that whatever he did, he did well, whether it be as lay preacher or farmer, as folk high school principal or ditch digger.

In April of that year it was reported that Pastor Girtz and family were on their way home on a furlough. Miss Anna Olesen was also coming home, but had become ill on the way and had been a patient in a hospital in Jerusalem for a while. She had, however, regained her health and had gone on a visit to Denmark before coming to America.

The annual meeting of the Santal Committee which was held May 19, 1931, was of more than usual importance. It was reported that Miss Dagmar Pedersen, M.D., of Selma, California, had been called by the mission authorities in India as a medical missionary. She was a graduate of the medical school of the University of California, had practiced medicine for some years, and had taken postgraduate work in New York.

When Mr. Bjerkestrand first went to the mission field, he had not had a regular theological training, although he had received very valuable religious instruction, especially at the Lutheran Bible Institute. He had gone out to manage the tea garden, but had been more and more drawn toward regular mission work. He had now spent one year at the Luther Theological Seminary, and upon his request the Santal Committee granted him a year's extension of his furlough in order that he might continue his studies and receive ordination.

Then came what was truly a dramatic moment in the meeting. Pastor and Mrs. Pederson asked — it would hardly be too much to say that they begged — for permission to return to India for a fourth term. He had communicated with the superintendent, Pastor Rosenlund, and had obtained his consent. The plan was for a short term, and they were to be stationed at Kaerabani where they had begun their mission work in 1905. With the consent of the Committee they now hoped also to be able to end it there.

It was a serious moment. The depression was upon us in earnest. A crop failure in the tea garden had materially affected the income of the mission, and all agreed that there was no one available to do Pederson's work at home as successfully as he had done it. Besides, he was now sixty-two years old.

After a season of prayerful consideration of the matter the Santal Committee gave its consent, and on August 12, 1931, Pedersons started on their fourth trip to India. Dr. Dagmar Pedersen went with them. They reached Calcutta October 8.

The difficult question was now: Who was to become the successor to Pastor Pederson as directing officer of the American Santal Mission? It seems like God's merciful guidance that the thoughts came to center upon Pastor M. C. Dixen. He possessed qualifications not easily found in anyone else whom there could be question of calling. He was Danish by birth, was a graduate of Augsburg College and Seminary, and was now a member of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. From his foster-father, Mr. Jens Dixen, he had inherited a warm love of foreign missions. He had thus many connections in the different church bodies that unofficially supported the Santal Mission. Pastor Dixen accepted the call extended to him and moved to Minneapolis with his family in November, 1931.

With the passing of 1931 another five-year period had come to a close. The average annual income had amounted to \$15,-985.57. This included very considerable sums received through the committee of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. On account of the depression the last couple of years had shown a serious downward trend. This circumstance was soon to lead

to some very discouraging experiences both for the missionaries and the Santal Committee. At its annual meeting in May, 1932, it had made arrangements for returning the Bjerkestrand and Girtz families, and also Miss Olesen to the field. Pastor Stanley Olson of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America had also been called and was to go out together with them, but as time passed, it was found advisable to send out the two families only, because of the difficult financial circumstances. They left for the field at the end of August. From Santalistan came the information that it had become necessary to make considerable reductions in salaries.

The financial depression had come to be felt more and more in all spheres of religious work, perhaps more than ordinarily in the case of the Santal Mission, because most of the church groups from which it drew its support had not officially included this branch of work in their common endeavors. Consequently, they did not have the same feeling of responsibility for it as they had for "their own" work. The fact that the income for 1932 had gone down to \$9,759.69, and for 1933 to \$8,300.94 showed clearly the result of the situation.

Miss Olesen, whom it had not been possible to return to the field on account of lack of funds, was for some time traveling in the interest of the mission, but was in 1934 advised to accept a call as matron of the Salem Old People's Home in Elkhorn, Iowa. It also became necessary to advise Pastor Olson to accept church work here at home. In him the Santal Mission lost a warmhearted and promising worker.

Under these disheartening circumstances it was very encouraging to read a New Year's greeting by Rector Hans Hoeg, the president of the Norwegian Santal Committee, to the friends of the mission in that country: "God will give salvation to him who longs for it. Look upward! That is what we need. The sun is always shining behind the clouds. Our God is yet living."

The year 1934 marked a distinct forward step in the history of the American Santal Mission, in spite of the fact that the financial depression was still upon us. That year the Santal

Committee held its annual meeting in St. John's Church, Northfield, Minnesota, April 27 to 29. It was the first time that the annual meeting was held outside of Minneapolis, and while all the previous meetings had only lasted one full day, or even less, arrangements had this time been made for a convention that lasted from Friday to Sunday. Dr. Ostergaard and Pastor and Mrs. Bernhard Helland had just returned from the mission field. Miss Miller and Miss Olesen were also present. All of them made their contributions to a rich and varied program.

The executive committee had for some time been working with the formulation of statutes for the American Santal Mission. These were adopted by the meeting. The following are some of the most important parts of their contents:

An association was formed under the name of *The Santal Mission of the Northern Churches — American Branch*. Members are the workers in the Santal Mission, delegates sent by societies, etc., and others attending the annual meetings and thereby showing love for the work.

The aim of the association is to awaken interest in the mission, to gather funds for it, and to secure missionary candidates.

The Board of Directors (The Santal Committee) is to consist of twelve members, besides as many as three members-at-large. Of these twelve, four shall belong to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America; two to the Lutheran Free Church; two to the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church; two to the United Danish Lutheran Church; one to the Church of the Lutheran Brethren; and one to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Eielsen Synod).

On account of the change in the rules, four new members



Prof. A. Helland, American Trustee, 1939—. Member of the Executive Committee

were elected on the Santal Committee at this meeting, namely: Dr. Carl M. Weswig, St. Paul, Minnesota; Pastors Irving H. Petersen and L. M. Stavig, Northfield, Minnesota, and Mr. L. L. Roholt, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The executive committee is incorporated and is thus the legally recognized representative of the American Santal Mission.

This organization has on the whole worked very well. It has given the mission both breadth and elasticity. The new rule of extending the meetings over three days, always including a week-end, and holding it in different localities, has been the means of creating an ever-widening circle of friends for the cause.

12

As Sorrowful, Yet Always Rejoicing

Miss Dagmar Miller returned to Santalistan in November, 1934. At the farewell service at Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa, the then ninety-year-old Pastor Kjølhedde gave the main address. "All in the audience must have felt the touch of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts when he pronounced the blessing upon Dagmar Miller," wrote Pastor Dixen in *Santal-missionæren* in telling about this service.

Missionary Helland did considerable traveling in the interest of the Santal Mission until he in the summer of 1935 suffered a serious attack of rheumatic fever. It looked for a while as though the intended return to India that fall would have to be postponed indefinitely, but he recovered more quickly than hoped for, and his doctor advised him to leave, the sooner the better in order to avoid the cold American winter. On November 2, 1935, he and his wife left Vancouver, British Columbia, for Santalistan.

To make the measure full, as it seemed, Dr. Ostergaard had to undergo a serious operation, and his health was also otherwise weakened. For this reason it was decided that his departure for India should be deferred until the fall of 1936. This also seemed advisable on account of the financial situation.

However, he regained his strength more rapidly than hoped for, and as soon as he felt able, he began to travel in the interest of the mission.

In the latter part of January, 1935, Pastor and Mrs. M. A. Pederson left Kaerabani and arrived in Minneapolis in the middle of March where a welcome service was held in Trinity Church. Pastor Hulteng was present and gave the address of welcome, and the remarks that both Pastor Pederson and his wife made in answer thereto breathed thanks to God and the mission friends for the opportunity that had been given them to serve the Santal Mission for over thirty years. Their minds were just as alert as ever, their humor just as sweet and sparkling. Yet, they also showed clear evidence of having "borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat."

In October came the sad news that Pastor Pederson had suffered an apoplectic stroke. He had very little pain, but his left side had become lame and he had some difficulty in speaking. But he was as cheerful as ever, and God showed His great mercy by restoring him to a fair degree of health so that he even was able to accompany his wife on short speaking trips and to give his testimony about the grace of God which had been given to the Christian congregations in Santalistan.

The 1935 and 1936 annual meetings were held in Hampton, Iowa, and Waupaca, Wisconsin, respectively. Both of them were very well attended and very inspiring. The theme of the Hampton meeting indicates the trend of both of them: "The King's business requires haste." In both instances services were held in neighboring churches on Sunday morning with offerings to the Santal Mission.

The question of the paper *Santalmissionæren* continued to be a problem during these years, both as to language and finances. The English language came into more common use in its contents and at a meeting of the Santal Committee held in the fall of 1935, it was decided that fifty cents of each personal donation should be applied to subscriptions to the paper, new or old. This decision opened the way for a larger number of subscribers, as well as a more "live" subscription list.

In 1936 Dr. Ostergaard was married to Miss Alma Skovholt of Moreton, North Dakota. In her he received a devoted helpmeet and the Santal Mission an efficient worker. Being a member of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Mrs. Ostergaard brought with her a closer connection also of this church group to the Santal Mission. Final decision as to their departure to the mission field had to be temporarily deferred on account of the financial difficulties. However, later in the summer it was decided to send them out, and they left New York October 3 and traveled via Denmark and Norway. A farewell service was held in St. Peder's Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pastor J. C. Aaberg's parish, Sunday evening before they left Minneapolis. It was so much more necessary that Dr. Ostergaard should leave for India as soon as possible since Dr. Dagmar Pedersen's furlough was due.

On August 28, 1936, news was received that Pastor W. M. Hagen had entered the sabbath rest in store for the people of God. It had seemed so altogether fitting that he should succeed Professor Blegen on the Santal Committee. His last, and perhaps for him most blessed years he had spent as hospital missionary although much of his work was done for sick people in private homes. His final illness was long and painful. "Now he was permitted to go home, this friend of God and man, a faithful brother and co-worker. But victory is always the outcome for the people of God," wrote Pastor Dixen in *Santal-missionæren* after his death.

With the close of 1936 another five-year period had passed in the history of the American Santal Mission. The average annual income had been \$14,646.75 which was somewhat less than during the previous period. But there was one redeeming feature: This time there was an upward trend towards the last, instead of a downward one.

Dr. Dagmar Pedersen returned from India the first part of May, 1937. After some weeks of rest at her home in Selma, California, she did considerable traveling, especially in the Danish congregations on the West Coast.

On August 17, 1937, Pastor M. A. Pederson received the summons to enter into the joy of he Lord. But while the message caused deep mourning to many, the joy was still deeper, for the Lord who does all things well, had also done well with His faithful servant.

Towards fall the information reached the Santal Committee that Miss Dagmar Miller had had an attack of typhoid fever up in Assam. Dr. Dagmar Pedersen was at home on furlough, and Dr. Ostergaard was at Benagaria, more than three hundred miles away. Besides, he was suffering a great deal from dysentery, but the Lord had mercy upon them and restored them to health.

Little by little indications were noticed that the great depression had passed its climax. Thus the income for 1937 amounted to \$18,119.83. Included in this total was, however, an individual gift of \$3,000.00.

In the meantime the annual meeting had been held in Willmar, Minnesota, in May of 1937. On this occasion the seventieth anniversary of the Santal Mission was appropriately remembered.

In his report to the forty-seventh meeting of the Santal Mission, held in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, in June, 1938, the secretary reported that Missionary Girtz and family had come home on furlough. They had suffered considerably from illness during their last term on the mission field. Dr. Dagmar Pedersen was now ready to return to India.



Dr. C. M. Weswig, member of the Executive Committee

The secretary also mentioned the fact that Norway had now as many missionaries in Santalistan as Denmark and America together.

As already mentioned, the American Santal Committee regarded itself from the beginning as simply an auxiliary to the Santal Mission. For fourteen years it sent contributions before it ever had a missionary in the field. However, as the time passed, the idea became more and more general, at least in Scandinavia, that of the total needed from the home countries, Denmark and Norway were to furnish 40% each and America 20%, and that the number of missionaries sent out from each country should correspond somewhat to this ratio.

As far as the present writer knows, this rule has never been officially adopted, and has not been strictly adhered to. There would also be considerable difficulties connected with putting it into practice.

At the annual meeting in Fergus Falls five members were to be elected on the Santal Committee, including one to fill the vacancy after Pastor M. A. Pederson. The four whose terms had expired were re-elected, and to succeed Pastor Pederson the meeting elected Pastor Odd Gornitzka, teacher in the Lutheran Bible Institute. He had for many years been a warm friend and supporter of the Santal Mission.

On September 25, 1938, Missionary P. O. Bodding passed away in Odense, Denmark. He had given forty-four years of his life to the service of the Santal Mission. The Lord had endowed him with unusual linguistic gifts and these he had used in full measure to the honor of God and for the spiritual, cultural, and material welfare of the Santal people. This quiet, unassuming Christian had won for himself a prominent place in the ranks of foreign missionaries in our time.

On December 21, 1938, the Lord called Pastor A. J. Hulteng unto Himself. He was then over seventy-eight years old, had been a member of the Santal Committee for forty-four years, and had served continuously as its president for thirty-six years. Pastor Hulteng had heard Missionary Skrefsrud and had be-

come so gripped by his message that he followed him from place to place for some time. It was not only his desire to learn as much as possible about the mission that urged him on; it was the spirit of the message of the great missionary, and he received an impression that never left him. Missionary Skrefsrud is also supposed to have expressed the wish that he should become a member of the American Santal Committee.

Dr. Carl M. Weswig represented the Santal Committee at the funeral of Pastor Hulteng which took place on Christmas Eve, 1938. Pastor Hulteng "went home for Christmas."

13

The War Period

The last eight or nine years have witnessed tremendous changes which have affected every country in the world and every area of life, thus also the Santal Mission.

The American Santal Mission held its forty-eighth annual meeting in Radcliffe, Iowa, June 18 to 21, 1939. In his annual report the secretary paid tribute to the memory of Pastor Hulteng and his work for the Santal Mission. He also called attention to the fact that a new edition of Pastor M. A. Pederson's book, *In the Land of the Santals*, had been published. Missionaries Bjerkestrand, Girtz, and Mrs. M. A. Pederson had traveled extensively during the year in the interest of the mission. It was the intention that the Bjerkestrands were to return to India in the fall, while the Girtz family had had their furlough extended for another year, owing to poor health. While the income had been less in 1938 than during the preceding couple of years, there were hopeful signs that 1939 would be more prosperous for the mission.

At this meeting Dr. C. M. Weswig was elected president of the American Santal Committee, to succeed Pastor Hulteng. He had been a member of the committee for several years and most of this time he had also served on the executive committee. Professor Helland was elected American trustee for the Santal Mission.

Santalmisionæren for October, 1939, came to its readers in a new dress and with a new name, *The Santal Missionary*. The title page had always been adorned with pictures of Børresen and Skrefsrud. Now that of Pederson had been added. It had become an English paper although articles written in Norwegian have appeared occasionally.

On October 5, 1939, Mrs. M. A. Pederson went quietly and painlessly to sleep in Jesus. Even after her husband's death she had continued to be active in furthering the cause of the Santal Mission. About two weeks before she died she had spoken at a meeting in Trinity Church in Minneapolis which she regarded as her spiritual home.

At the time Dr. Weswig was elected president of the Santal Committee, he had stated that he was not ready to accept the position, and asked for time to think the matter over. But at a meeting of the Committee on

October 24, 1939, he stated that he felt that he would have to decline the election. The committee then elected Pastor Odd Gornitzka in his place and was happy when he stated that he was willing to serve.

Missionary Bjerkestrand and family returned to India in the first part of December, 1939. The income that year had amounted to \$23,688.62. This was an increase of over \$8,000.00 over the previous year. It was the first time in the history of the mission that it had exceeded \$20,000.00.



Rev. Odd Gornitzka, President, 1939—.
Member of the Executive Committee

Missionary Skrefsrud was born February 4, 1840. The January, 1940, issue of *The Santal Missionary* was published as a 'Skrefsrud issue' commemorating the centennial of his birth. The main contribution was an interesting sketch of his life by editor N. N. Rønning. Later in the spring he re-wrote this sketch and enlarged it. It was published by the Santal Committee under the title, *Lars O. Skrefsrud, an Apostle to the Santals*, a delightfully interesting book of 93 pages.

Then came the fatal ninth of April, 1940, with Germany's sudden, murderous attack upon Denmark and Norway. One of the effects, as far as the Santal Mission was concerned, was that no funds could be sent out from Denmark or Norway, even if it should prove possible to collect any, which was by no means certain. The total annual budget of the Santal Mission had increased to about \$125,000.00. Norway and Denmark had contributed between eighty and eighty-five per cent; America fifteen to twenty. The most that could be expected from here was about \$20,000.00 a year. Even with the most severe entrenchments on the mission field, the future looked very dark indeed.

This was the situation when the annual meeting of the American Santal Mission was held in Newell, Iowa, May 16 to 19, 1940. The meeting decided to send a strong appeal to the Norwegian and Danish Lutheran Church bodies, placing before them the distress of the Santal Mission. In every case the appeal was received in a sympathetic spirit.

The secretary informed the meeting that the executive committee on the mission field had held a meeting at which it had been decided to reduce all salaries both of the missionaries and the native workers by one-third. It had also been recommended that Missionary Bernhard Helland and wife should be granted their furlough at once, partly so as to reduce the expenses on the field, and partly in order to help to strengthen the activity in America, from where most of the aid was expected.

It was also reported that Miss Dagmar Miller was expected home soon, as her health was poor. Pastor and Mrs. Helland returned in the latter part of August. After a short rest he

started on an intensive traveling activity, visiting a number of congregations belonging to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America in the Middle Eastern and Atlantic Coast States.

The income of the American Santal Mission for 1940 amounted to \$26,761.76. This was \$3,073.14 more than the previous year. The appeal for aid to the mission in its distress had commenced to bear fruit.

Pastor S. M. Stenby, who for a number of years had represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on the Santal Mission Committee, passed away suddenly on January 11, 1941. That evening he had visited a neighbor living across the street from his home in Clear Lake, Iowa. Going home he was run down by an automobile and died almost instantly. In him the Santal Committee had lost a valuable member, and the Santal Mission a faithful friend and intercessor.



Silas Andersen, M.D., Member of the
Executive Committee

The February, 1941, issue of *The Santal Missionary* contained some very important information about the Santal Mission. After drastic reductions had been decided upon on the mission field, the minimum budget absolutely needed for 1941 would amount to about \$70,000.00. It had been estimated that the income from the American Mission and the tea garden would probably reach \$37,000.00, which would yet leave a deficit of \$33,000.00. A subsidy of perhaps \$13,000.00 had been tentatively promised from the Norwegian Government-in-exile in London, and a yet undetermined amount was expected from

the Lutheran World Action in America. These were the bright spots in a gloomy picture.

In 1941 the American Santal Mission had become fifty years old. The annual meeting was that year held in Immanuel Congregation, Racine, Wisconsin, May 22 to 25.

President Gornitzka spoke words of welcome to the missionaries who had returned home since the previous meeting, namely, Miss Dagmar Miller and Pastor and Mrs. Helland. He also welcomed Pastors Victor Bagger and Anders Malme and families of the Danish and Norwegian missions. They had come to America because they had not been able to return to their home countries on account of the war.

A special word of thanks was expressed to president J. A. Aasgaard of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America for his valuable aid in securing a share in the subsidy from the Norwegian Government-in-exile for the Santal Mission.

Pastor J. O. Blanness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was elected a member of the Santal Committee instead of Pastor Stenby.

The income of the Santal Mission in 1941 was \$26,954.31, and the average annual income for the five-year period just ended had been \$22,151.66. Thus a new high had again been reached.

The situation which had been difficult enough before became still more so with the entrance of the United States in World War II. There was even the possibility that the way to send money from America would be closed. The situation at home was tense but we can hardly visualize how much more tense it must have been for the missionaries in the field. But the Lord who is full of mercy and lovingkindness strengthened the faith and put the doubts to shame. A brief year-by-year record will reveal how wonderfully He heard the cries of His fearful disciples and renewed their courage.

The fear that some had entertained that it would become impossible to send money to India after America entered the war proved groundless. But would there be somewhat adequate funds to send? It was under such circumstances that the ex-

ecutive committee of the Santal Mission met in February, 1942, and decided to send a letter to every subscriber to *The Santal Missionary* asking for three things: First, to send as large a contribution as possible to the mission, and to do it immediately. Second, to give short term loans at a low rate of interest. Third, to pay all old subscriptions to the paper. The plan was to borrow \$10,000.00 to be cabled to India at once and to be paid back from receipts in the fall and following winter. How well the suggestion was received is shown by the fact that no less than \$27,000.00 was cabled to the field between December 17, 1941, and April 6, 1942.

To the annual meeting of the Santal Mission in June of that year it was reported that the appeal for loans had brought \$11,000.00. Several of the creditors did not ask for an interest.

Dr. Kristofer Hagen had offered his services as a medical missionary. He was the oldest son of the late Pastor W. M. Hagen, and was an ordained pastor as well as a physician. On account of the circumstances it would be some time before he could go to the field, however.

In the meantime, the secretary, Pastor M. C. Dixen, had received and accepted a call from St. Mary's Lutheran Congregation, Kenosha, Wisconsin, but declared himself willing to continue as secretary-treasurer until a successor could be secured. He had served the Santal Mission for eleven years.

On September 27, 1942, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Santal Mission was celebrated in Trinity Church, Minneapolis. In that connection the September issue of *The Santal Missionary* was published as an anniversary number. Dr. Carl M. Weswig preached the anniversary sermon in the morning, and in the afternoon several brief addresses were delivered. Presidents Aasgaard and Burntvedt had sent written greetings as they were unable to be present in person. In the evening Pastor J. C. Aaberg and Missionary Helland spoke, President Gornitzka led the meetings.

A fellowship dinner was given in Bethany Lutheran Church the previous evening to which were invited the members of

the Santal Committee as well as the missionaries at home on furlough and representatives of the Lutheran foreign mission boards having headquarters in Minneapolis.

At the business meeting held in connection with the anniversary celebration Missionary Bernhard Helland was elected secretary-treasurer of the American Santal Mission to succeed Pastor M. C. Dixen.

As already mentioned, Missionaries Bagger and Malme and families had come to America to spend their furloughs. Pastor Bagger had accepted a call from a Danish congregation in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and Pastor Malme had taken up deputation work after first having worked for some time in Trinity Congregation, Brooklyn, New York.

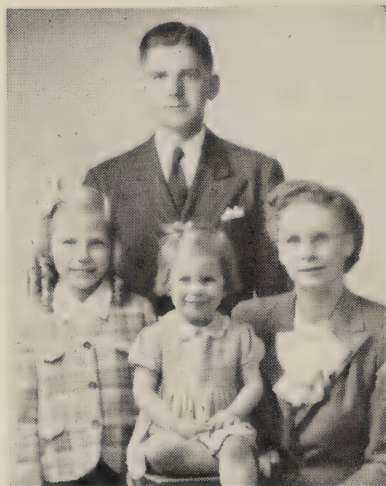
The next annual meeting of the American Santal Mission was held in Helmar Lutheran Congregation, Newark, Illinois, May 7 to 9,

1943. The receipts for 1942 had amounted to \$25,559.99. Besides this, loans had been made amounting to \$11,000.00. By May, 1943, most of these loans had been repaid.

Dr. Hagen and family were ready to go to the mission field.

In 1943 another of those periodic famines occurred in India. It was not without some hesitation that the secretary again sent a letter to the subscribers of *The Santal Missionary* with an appeal for aid. He had hoped that it would bring \$3,000.00 or perhaps \$4,000.00. In the December issue of the paper he was able to report that it had brought \$7,000.00 in seven weeks.

In January, 1944, a cablegram was received from India with an earnest request for Dr. Hagen to come out as soon as pos-



Rev. Kr. Hagen, M.D., and family.
Missionaries, 1946—

sible as Dr. Ostergaard had now served a long and strenuous term and was sorely in need of rest, but Dr. Hagen had in the meantime been called into military service, and insistent requests for his early release proved unavailing.

The fifty-third annual meeting of the Santal Mission was held in Bethany Congregation, Racine, Wisconsin, in May, 1944. The reports both of the president and secretary-treasurer breathed thanks to God and hope for the future. The income for 1943 had amounted to \$29,585.48 besides \$7,918.84 for famine relief. As to the missionaries now in America it was reported that Pastor Girtz was serving a congregation in Albert Lea, Minnesota, and Pastor Bagger one in Winnipeg. Pastor Malme was continuing his field service in the interest of the mission. So was also Miss Miller. The secretary had also spent much time in traveling for the mission.

During the summer of 1944 news was received from time to time that brought a strong reminder that "through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God."

Pastor Arne Thu, who for many years had been a missionary in Santalistan, had returned to Norway and had become pastor at Vestby, near Oslo. On some pretense or other he was arrested by the Gestapo and interned at Grini. Here the big, strong man was tortured to death for the simple reason that he had given spiritual succor to his fellow prisoners. "They could not conquer his spirit; so they killed him." Then word came from Santalistan that a young Norwegian missionary, Magnus Landoy, had died of pneumonia. His wife was Norwegian-American, a sister of Mrs. Bjerkestrand. Mrs. Landoy and her little daughter returned to the home of her parents near Radcliffe, Iowa.

Then came the information that Dr. Ostergaard had been so seriously ill that it was feared that he would not be able to survive a journey home. One will understand better what Dr. Ostergaard had had to go through when he hears that during 1943 he and his Indian assistant had treated no less than 32,235 cases of illness, but the Lord spared him. In December, 1944, he and his family arrived safely in America.

The April, 1945, issue of *The Santal Missionary* was published as an anniversary number, for the paper was then fifty years old. In that connection the president of the Santal Committee, Pastor Gornitzka, had written a very sympathetic article about the quiet, yet exceedingly important mission that this little paper had performed for the furtherance of the cause of foreign missions.



Hilma Gjerde, R.N., Missionary, 1945—

The fifty-fourth annual meeting of the Santal Mission was held in Immanuel Danish Lutheran Congregation, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 26 to 29, 1945. The reports indicated that the work at home had been carried on as usual. Pastor Malme, Miss Miller, and the secretary had given much time to deputation work. The income for 1944 had been \$39,177.41. It was hoped that several new workers would be able to go to the mission field in the near future, among them Dr. Hagen and family, Miss Hilma Gjerde,

Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (formerly the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America), and Miss Alice Axelson, Red Wing, Minnesota, of the Lutheran Augustana Synod. Both are registered nurses with additional specialized training. Besides these were Mr. and Mrs. Harald Riber, members of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was a theological graduate and had taken postgraduate work at the University of Minnesota.

The Bagger and Malme families were soon to return to the field. They had come to be looked upon almost as our own. Pastor Malme and family left in August via Norway. Pastor

and Mrs. Bagger and their youngest daughter left for India in January, 1946, while their two oldest daughters remained in America. The Baggers went back to their former work as leaders of the Saldoha Leper Colony.

The meeting had also the joy of bidding Dr. Ostergaard and family welcome home.

During the fellowship dinner held Saturday evening the rumor was spread that World War II had come to a close, and there was a deep, quiet rejoicing. However, as had been the case at the close of the first world war, so also this time the rumor proved to be premature, but it was not to be long before the day of victory was to dawn.

Miss Hilma Gjerde was commissioned for her work by president Gornitzka on December 2, 1945. She left New York December 22 and arrived in Calcutta January 26, 1946.

Miss Dagmar Miller was nearing the age limit for lady missionaries and her health was not strong. For these reasons it was considered unwise to return her to the field. Here at home she has continued her blessed activity in pleading the cause of the mission in the congregations. Pastor Girtz and family have also had to give up the thought of going out again on account of impaired health. For all of them this has been a trying disappointment, but Pastor Girtz is also continuing to further the cause of the mission here at home as opportunity offers itself.



Alice Axelson, R.N., Missionary, 1946—

The Present

The war has been won; when is the peace to be won? This is the anxious question today. It concerns also the Christian missions of the world, the Santal Mission with all the rest.

The fifty-fifth annual meeting of the American Santal Mission was held in Calvary Church, Willmar, Minnesota, in May, 1946. The war was over and it had become possible to send money to the mission field both from Norway and Denmark. It was reported that the income here in America for 1945 had amounted to \$40,215.89.

Dr. Hagen had been released from the army service and was ready to go out as soon as passage for himself and family could be obtained. Miss Axelson had been commissioned and was ready to go also. The great problem was how to obtain passage.

After having served as secretary-treasurer of the Santal Mission for four years, Pastor Bernhard Helland, with wife and little daughter, was also ready to return to India later in the year. As Pastor J. Gausdal, superintendent of the mission in India, was greatly in need of rest after a long and arduous service, Helland had been elected acting superintendent. Thus it would be necessary to find another secretary-treasurer to take his place here at home.

This was the situation when the time had come for the annual meeting in Willmar in May, 1946. There were enough of problems, but the Lord in His mercy opened one door after another. Even the sphere of action of the Santal Mission was widened. So far six church groups had come to take an increasing interest in the work of the mission, although in a majority of cases only unofficially. But for years there had been individuals also in the Swedish Lutheran Augustana Synod who had shown interest in the work, and Miss Alice Axelson, a member of the Augustana Synod, had offered her services as a trained nurse. The bond of fellowship was further strengthened

by the fact that Pastor R. C. Burke of the Calvary Lutheran Church in Minneapolis was elected a member of the Santal Mission Board.

Pastor Dixen was called as secretary-treasurer and was willing to accept the position. Dr. Hagen was trying to secure passage by steamer for himself and family, but was met with one disappointment after another. Miss Axelson was also to go with the Hagen family. Hellands were to go by plane in order to reach the field as soon as possible, and they were fortunate enough to secure passage to go by the end of August. Everything had been arranged when their little daughter contracted a light case of polio and they found themselves forced to cancel their reservations. But in less than forty-eight hours it was arranged so that Hagens should take their places on the plane; but there was no room for Miss Axelson.

Helland's child had a remarkably quick recovery from the polio, and again arrangements were made for them to go by plane. This time Miss Axelson was also to go with them. They were to go via England and France directly to Calcutta. Then the child came down with chicken pox, and once more the reservations had to be cancelled, but during these trying days an insistent request was cabled from Oslo that they should go by Norway and proceed to India by the mission plane Ansgar. This was God's answer to their anxious question: What does the Lord mean by these hindrances?

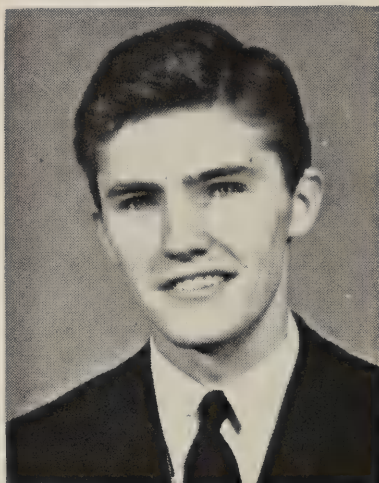
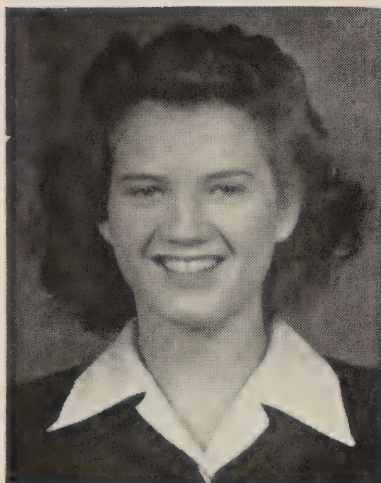
They left Minneapolis for Norway October 22 and after a stay of about ten days in Oslo, they arrived in Calcutta November 9, together with Miss Axelson and several Norwegian missionaries. They had had a very welcome opportunity to confer with the Norwegian Santal Committee and especially with Pastor Gausdal.

In the meantime, Dr. Dagmar Pedersen had arrived in Boston early in July and had gone to her home in Selma, California, for a furlough that lasted less than a year because her presence in Assam was so badly needed.

The annual income during 1946 amounted to \$36,545.53.

Another five-year period was at an end. The average annual income had been \$34,216.86.

The fifty-sixth annual meeting of the American Santal Mission was held in Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, May 9 to 11, 1947. Several former and present missionaries were in attendance, as Pastor Girtz, Miss Miller, Dr. Dagmar Pedersen, Pastor and



Rev. Harold Riber and wife. Missionaries, 1947

Mrs. Bjerkestrand, and Dr. Ostergaard. Pastor and Mrs. Tromborg were also present as were Mr. and Mrs. Harald Riber who were commissioned for their service during the convention. After his ordination they left America in August going via Denmark to visit with relatives. They arrived in India in the fall.

Dr. Dagmar Pedersen started immediately after the meeting for San Francisco where she was to embark for India.

On June 27, 1947, a cablegram conveyed the sad news that Pastor Anders Malme had passed away in Assam two days previously after an operation for appendicitis. We had come to love him and to appreciate his work among us. Mrs. Malme is a daughter of Rector Hans Hoeg in Oslo who for many years

has served as president of the Norwegian Santal Committee. She is at present connected with the Norwegian school for missionaries' children on the field.

Both Pastor Gornitzka and Pastor Aaberg visited Europe last summer and had an opportunity to meet with both of the Scandinavian Committees at a joint meeting in Copenhagen.

The income from contributions to the American Santal Mission during 1947 was by far the largest in its history. It amounted to \$50,422.26, which was \$10,026.37 more than for any previous year.

By mutual agreement the three mission secretaries, Pastor Ernst Hallen from Norway, Pastor Axel Thormann from Denmark, and Pastor Marius C. Dixen from America, have just visited the mission field in Santalistan. At the time these lines are being written, in the middle of March, 1948, they are about to return home, or may already have left India. Pastor Dixen is to visit Denmark and Norway on the way. Missionary Bjerkestrand is serving as acting secretary-treasurer during his absence.

It has already been mentioned that at the time of the reorganization of the Santal Committee in 1934, it was decided that it should consist of twelve regular members and three members-at-large. The twelve are elected according to certain quotas from the different participating church groups. The three other places on the committee are reserved for persons whom it may seem particularly desirable to have along, regardless of the quota regulations.

It may be of interest to the readers to know who the present members are, to what church group they belong, and when they were first elected.

From the Evangelical Lutheran Church (formerly the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America): Dr. Carl M. Weswig (1934); Rev. Odd Gornitzka (1938); Rev. Nils Klungtvedt (1939); Rev. P. L. Mork (1945); Dr. John E. Gronli (1947).

From the Danish Lutheran Church: Rev. J. C. Aaberg (1917); Rev. Haakon Jørgensen (1935).

From the United Evangelical Church (formerly the United Danish): Mr. C. P. Heide (1932); Dr. Silas Andersen (1937); Rev. J. M. Girtz (1946).

From the Lutheran Free Church: Prof. A. Helland (1911); Rev. Chr. G. Olson (1943).

From the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Eielsen Synod): Rev. J. O. Blanness (1941).

From the Church of the Lutheran Brethren: Miss Ruth Skovholt (1942).

From the Lutheran Augustana Synod: Rev. Rudolph C. Burke (1946).

The Executive Committee is the incorporated representative of the American Santal Mission. Its present members are: Silas Andersen, Odd Gornitzka, Andreas Helland, and Carl M. Weswig.

The American Santal Mission has now thirteen workers, nine in the field and four at home on furlough. They are: Miss Alice Axelson (Augustana); Rev. and Mrs. Bjerkestrand (on furlough) and Miss Hilma Gjerde (Evangelical Lutheran); Dr. and Mrs. Kristofer Hagen and Rev. and Mrs. B. A. Helland (Lutheran Free Church); Dr. Dagmar Pedersen (United Evangelical); Rev. and Mrs. H. Riber and Dr. and Mrs. E. Ostergaard (on furlough) (Danish Lutheran and Lutheran Brethren).

15

A Word in Conclusion

The American Santal Mission is as a Ruth among the Lutheran missions in this country. It has gathered ears of grain, left intentionally or unintentionally by the harvesters who are gathering the sheaves. They have always been kind to her, and now after over fifty-six years of quiet service her hand has been well filled, for she has to her credit an aggregate amount of \$740,000.00. But she has not finished her task. On the contrary, she intends to work harder than ever, fully conscious of the fact that the Master's field is full of grain.

Not a few persons have been mentioned in the foregoing pages, some with a word of appreciation; others have just had their names recorded. Others again have not even been mentioned by name. But although these on account of man's defective memory or other frailties may seem to have been forgotten, the Lord has not forgotten them. This is true both in re-



Missionaries' Furlough Home, 3229-31 Fremont Ave. S., Minneapolis

gard to missionaries and those here at home who have been most closely connected with the work. That which really counts is that God has not forgotten any of them.

But what about the spiritual results?

We can give the exact number of missionaries sent out. We can also state the exact amount received and spent for mission work. We can point to these results and say: "We know our own." This may of course be of a certain interest, but after all, it really means so very little.

So we ask again: What about the spiritual results?

Perhaps it is fortunate that we can have no definite idea as

to the number of souls won for Christ by our efforts, we who came into the work when it was already twenty-four years old, and who had no missionary in the field before it was thirty-seven years old, we who have always been the smallest of its three branches.

Nor does it matter. That which counts is the glorious fact that "the Lord knows His own." We can very well wait till "the books are opened" by Him who alone knows how to keep a fully dependable record. To us the greatest and purest joy will always be that He has permitted us to have a share in the work. For that, too, is by grace alone.

The present is full of problems, full of anxieties, but should not this after all be our greatest concern that we may be found trustworthy stewards of the mysteries of God. And why be anxious when God speaks to us in His Word and says: "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for that which is right?"

So the present may be filled with uncertainties, but the future is certain, for our Savior has said: "I live, and you will live also." This glorious promise holds good for Christian missions, too, as well as for all faithful servants of the Lord wherever He has placed them, at home or out on the missionary frontiers.

